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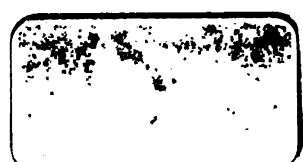
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PARSONS AND WIDOWS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“ PETER PRIGGINS,” “ THE PARISH CLERK,” &c.

J. Hewlett.

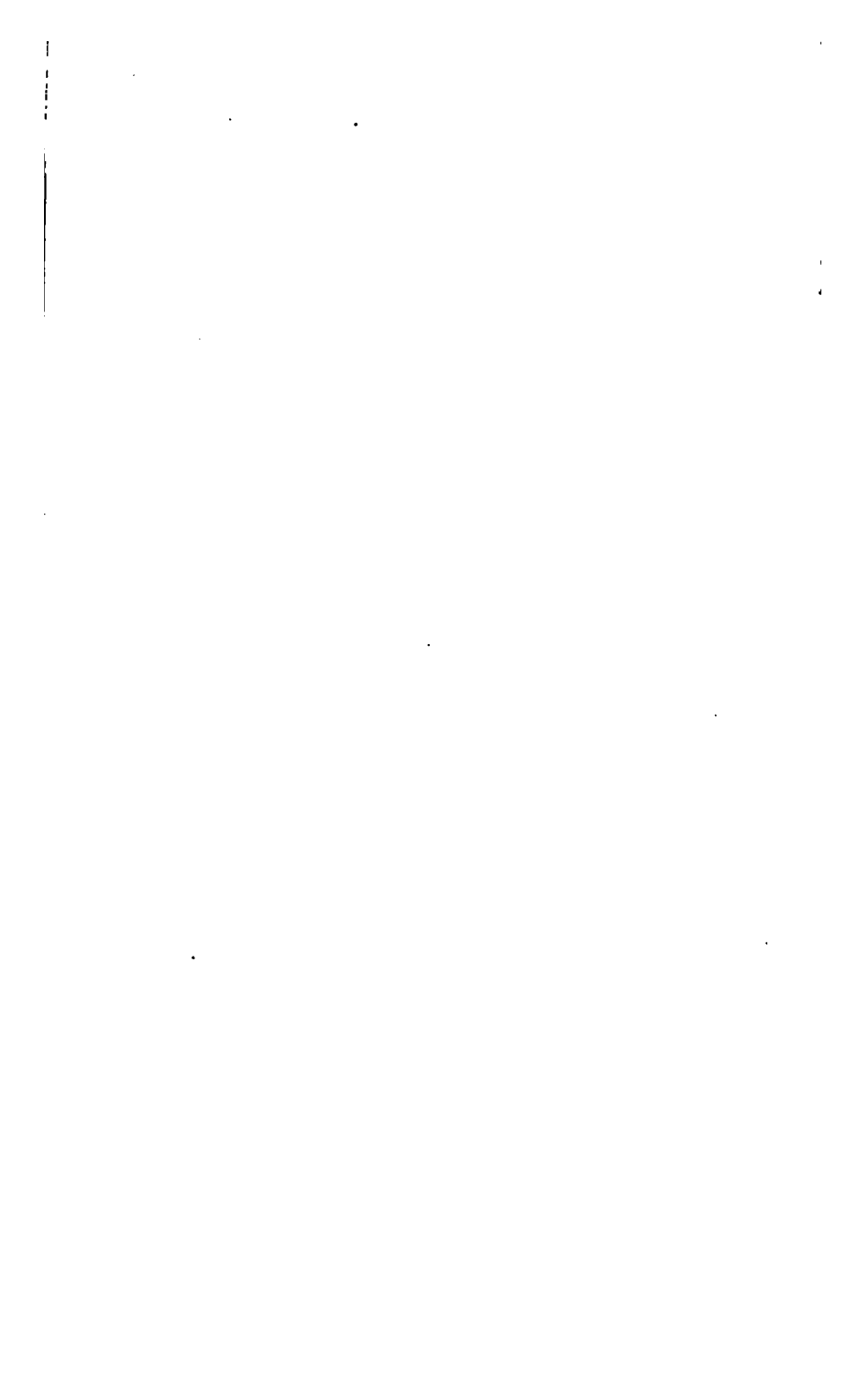
IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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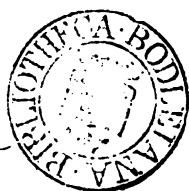
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PARSONS AND WIDOWS.

CHAPTER I.

How little is known of the real state of the clergy, except by the clergy themselves, or the country gentlemen near whom they live, or have their livings!—which is not precisely the same thing, as a very great number of them cannot make a living by their livings. I say *country* gentlemen, because, generally speaking, they appreciate the companionship of a scholar and a gentleman, although he may happen to have an ill-cut and rather seedy coat upon his shoulders, and a deficiency

of the precious metals in his napless but neatly-brushed trowsers' pockets.

They do not think it necessary to exclude him from their hospitable boards because he cannot afford "four suits a-year and the old ones taken in exchange." They appreciate the open-handedness that keeps him poor. They enter into all his little plans for the benefit of his humble hearers, and aid by their contributions the good cause for which, if he do his duty, he pleads in private as well as public. His domestic circumstances are well known to them, and his struggles to educate and place out in the world his numerous olive-branches are seen, admired, and aided by them.

Parsons are proverbially great populators of their country. The preventive check has not yet found its way into the parsonages of Great Britain; and, in spite of all the political economists that ever lived, male or female, (*anti-populatrices* I consider anomalies in nature), I trust the day may be very far distant that shall see such an unnatural engine introduced into the prolific walls of our *manses*.

The two last sentences are parenthetical, so I proceed.

In great towns, the private affairs of the clergy are not so well known as they are in villages and hamlets. Although the neighbouring great man, be he lord or commoner, may invite the rector or vicar of the neighbouring city or borough, whose representation in parliament he kindly takes under his especial care, to dine with him once or twice a-year, and give largely in aid of coal and soup subscriptions at Christmas, he very seldom knows or cares any thing about Mistress Rector or Mistress Vicar, and their nine or ten little incumbrances that eat the bread of carefulness at their frugal tables.

The great brewer, the banker, and the lawyer, may not consider it a disgrace to have the parson to say grace for them before and after their soup, fish, joints, poultry, and *entrées* — they may even ask him to take champagne with them. They may contribute their guinea towards the schools he has established, and put gold into the plate after a charity-sermon; they may even ask his wife

and daughters to tea and piano, and his sons to play cricket with their boys; but, in spite of all this condescension, they are quite in the dark as to all the little painful struggles that are necessary to enable his family to accept these invitations.

They hear of his being very good to the poor, and applaud him for it, but they know not to how many uses the shilling bestowed in charity might be put for those of his own house. They rather wonder that he should limit himself and his lady to two glasses of Marsala, at twenty-two shillings a dozen, after dinner.

It may be truly said that there are some clergymen, of high birth and large fortunes, and others who, either from merit or patronage, revel in well-endowed rectories, snug prebends, comfortable canonries, and delightful deaneries—but what are they among so many? —*rari aves, rari pisces* (and very odd fishes some of them are), *nantes in gurgite vasto* of the thousands, with stipends smaller and less regularly paid than the salaries of the “pampered menials,” who ride behind the carriages

or wait at the tables of the gentry of the land, or "the landed gentry," whichever the reader pleases.

I could extend these preliminary remarks to the end of the chapter, but I am not about to write an essay on church matters—merely to tell a tale—so *il me faut commencer*.

"And where do you intend going?" inquired my friend the Professor, as we sat at breakfast, playing a duet on coffee and hot rolls, in his chambers in Lincoln's Inn.

"I have not the remotest idea," said I; "I am tired of writing original matter, and correcting my own and the printer's errors, and am resolved to have a quiet week's holiday somewhere."

"Let me see," said the Professor, as he put his glass to his eye to enable him to do so. "Brighton is out of season; Cheltenham spoilt by over-building and counterfeit salts; Leamington *triste* to a degree; Bath obliterated from the list of watering-places; and Harrogate..."

“Do not trouble yourself to go through the list,” said I, interrupting my friend; “I do not call going to a ‘watering-place’—the very name gives me the idea of a house of call for hackney-coach horses—having a *quiet* holiday. The summer has just set in, but not with its accustomed severity. The gales blow genially from the south; the May-fly is on the water, and the trout, I hope, on the rise. I shall take my little carpet-bag and my fishing-tackle, walk into Piccadilly, and take my seat on the very first coach I see that is ready to start on the Western road, and beg of the driver to deposit my person at any village inn which he, in his experience, may recommend to me, where I may be snug and comfortable, and enjoy my favourite sport—fly-fishing.”

“Not a bad idea,” said the Professor. “I wish I could go with you, though I cannot *Xerxesize* the waters, and torment trout with deceptive ephemera. I *can* look on and—and—smoke a cigar,” (he might have said a dozen, with a running accompaniment of brandy and water; indeed, his mouth instinc-

tively opens so widely at the bare mention of them, that I am obliged to say to him, in the words of Horace—

Quid vult tanto professor hiatu,)

“but—I *cannot* go. I have a consultation at ten, on Slowe *versus* Toddleon, and at half-past a brief in...”

“Good morning,” said I; as I knew that, if once my friend got upon business, he would not allow me to go until he had given me an hour’s brief sketch of the speech he meant to make on his brief, which, as I hate law and lawyers—as lawyers—the profession, not the person—would have proved disagreeable as well as inconvenient.

“Going down, sir?” said a cad at the coach-office of the White Horse Cellar.

“Yes,” said I.

“What coach, sir?”

“I don’t care which.”

Cad looked as if he thought me a “rum customer,” but civilly asked,

“Short or long?”

“What coach is that just starting?”

“The Exeter Highflier—one of the fastest out of London. Room for two outs and an in,” replied the cad.

In a few seconds I was seated behind the coachman on the roof. As soon as we were off the stones, and I could make use of my voice without having the rattles in my throat, I explained my wishes to Jehu, who promised to enable me to fulfil them.

He kept his word; and after a delightful drive of some five or six hours’ duration, he deposited me and my luggage at a pretty little inn in the pretty little village of Clearstream, in the pretty county of Hants.

As soon as I had ascertained that I could have the use of a parlour and bedroom for a week, I begged to be allowed to speak to the landlord. He was out fishing.

“May I be allowed to join him?” said I.

“Certainly, sir. Here, Boots! show this gentleman across the meadows to the tumbling-bay, where your master spends the greater part of his time,” said the landlady—a little maliciously, as I thought.

As I had made an excellent luncheon at

Mrs. Botham's, of the Pelican, in Speenhamland—a house now, alas! *railwayed* of its glories—I started at once, meaning to sup heartily on trout, if I should be lucky enough to catch any. I found “mine host” whipping away energetically and scientifically. A few masonic words and signals showed him I was one of the gentle craft—so called, I presume, from their using *gentles* in their art—and in a very few minutes I was literally “up to my knees” in business—or pleasure.

The trout were numerous and hungry; our creels were soon filled; and, as I walked back with mine host, I was so pleased at my success, and at his generosity in giving me up the best casts, that I asked him to join me at supper. He agreed; and I must say he did justice to the trout, which were in high season—“as pink as salmon, and as crisp as a cabbage-leaf,” according to his description of them.

After supper, our first talk was, of course, about the art we both “fondly loved”—it is a strong term, and one difficult to be under-

stood but by those who love the art—and about the streams, the deeps, the runs, and the mill-tails in the neighbourhood. I heard sufficient to convince me that I had been well recommended by the driver of the Exeter Highflier, and resolved to give him an additional *tip* on my return for his sagacity in placing me so well.

As I thought it possible that I might introduce myself to some brother of the angle who would relieve the monotony of a daily *tête-à-tête* with mine host, I inquired about the society of the village, but found that, excepting the vicar and the apothecary, its inhabitants were of a very humble class, mere cultivators of the soil of Clearstream—hedgers and ditchers, thrashers and thatchers.

“And the vicar,” I asked. “What sort of a man is he?”

“A worthy and excellent old gentleman, sir,” replied mine host. “He has not been with us very long, but we all like him. He has been a fisherman, too, sir; but age and rheumatism forbid his gratifying his taste—but it don’t much matter. He came from

somewhere out of Wales, among the mountain streams. He is a mere *worm-bobber*—cannot throw a fly or spin a minnow. He never hooked a trout above a pound, though he says he has taken three or four dozen brace in a day. How *very* small they must run !”

“Is he difficult to approach ?” I inquired.

“Oh, no,” replied the landlord, mistaking the meaning of my question. “He lives just down by the church, and his gate is always open.”

I resolved to call the next day, and request him to show me his church, and, if I found him an agreeable person, to cultivate his acquaintance.

I put my resolution into force, and sent in my card with my compliments. I was ushered into a little room, which I afterwards heard was called the study, and found a benevolent-looking, elderly man, engaged in tutoring two little boys and a little girl, who, from the likeness they bore to himself, were evidently his own children.

He rose, and begged me to be seated. A

hint was given to the little girl, and, ere we had settled the weather question, with which, as true Britons, we opened our converse, she returned, followed by the maid, who carried a tray, on which were placed the materials for a little luncheon.

I took some bread and cheese, with a glass of particularly good, mild ale. He and his children joined me, and I felt, in a quarter of an hour, as if I was sitting among old young friends. I love children—spoilt ones being excluded—and love to draw them out. I love dogs, too, and both dogs and children know instinctively who love them. How we did talk and laugh!—we fairly “rattled away” for half an hour; when a nod from the father operated like the nod of some great Prospero, and the children and the luncheon vanished.

“Now, dear sir,” said the vicar, “tell me your business—in what can I aid you? My means are but small, but as far as they go I am ready to”

“I am afraid you will say I have no business to be here,” said I. “The truth is simply this: I am staying at the inn hard by for

a week's fishing. Chance has brought me here—or rather the driver of the Exeter Highflier. I am anxious to see the interior of your very pretty church, and to be shown any antiquities which it may contain. I have ventured to call upon *you* for that purpose, in preference to the parish-clerk. My name you know. I am a..." literary man—I was going to say, but suppressed the information for fear I should lower myself in his estimation—"I am an idle man at present, and trust that my taking this liberty will not offend you."

"Far from it, dear sir; I am happy to make your acquaintance. I will show you every thing worth seeing, with great pleasure—but upon one condition—that you dine and spend the remainder of the day with me. I am a plain man, as you see, and if you can eat part of a leg of Southdown mutton at the unfashionable hour of four, I shall be glad to see you."

I accepted the invitation as frankly as it was given—upon another condition—that he added to the dinner by cooking two brace of the finest trout I had taken overnight, and

which I had intended sending up per coach to my friend the Professor, who, as every professor ought to be, is very fond of good living.

These conditions being settled, we walked across the garden—a neat, trim, well-stocked half-acre, to the church. It was small, very old, and boasted of a curious font, and some curious niches near the altar. The images which had filled them were gone, removed, doubtless, by the hands of the Iconoclasts in their great zeal to do away with every thing conducing to idolatrous worship. There were a few figures of knights and esquires carved or countersunk on the stones of the chancel, but the brasses which had covered them had been removed by the same reckless hands—as though they had not *brass* enough already.

After seeing all that was to be seen in the village, the vicar proposed that we should pass the time which intervened before dinner would be ready by climbing a steep hill, which, as it were, impended over Clearstream, and from which one of the numerous rivulets that contributed to form the river Clear de-

rived its source. Of course, I readily assented to the proposal, though I am too puffy to enjoy hill-climbing, especially as he hinted at a splendid view of the country to be obtained from the summit.

The exertions required to reach the top were certainly great, but they were well repaid. The view was glorious. I will not attempt to describe it, because I should become too enthusiastic, and forget to stop until the space allowed me was no longer space.

Amidst other things that struck me particularly, was the view of five little churches, of which Clearstream was one, which were, or appeared to be, not more than a mile apart, and all to have been built in the same age, of the same size, and by the same architect. They lay in a circle, of which my new friend's church formed the centre.

I pointed to them as something remarkable, and the vicar told me that they were the lions of the neighbourhood, and that tradition had handed down a tale of their having been erected by a powerful baron, who had thus

removed from himself and family the displeasure of the church, which he had incurred by insulting one of her favoured sons. His overbearing pride had thus been made an instrument for providing places of worship for the humble sons of the soil.

“The clergymen of these churches,” said the vicar, “are, I am glad to say, my intimate friends. I came among them as a stranger and a poor man. They extended to me the open hand of friendship, and, ere I knew their worth, I gladly grasped it. We form a little society in ourselves. We have our little box of books from London, and when we have read them, we have plenty of food for conversation derived from their contents, without trespassing on the dangerous grounds of polemics or politics. We drop in when we please at each other’s houses, eat, drink, and are merry. We play a game of chess, backgammon, or threepenny whist; and I do not think five happier parsons or persons are to be found any where. Our great man is an absentee, because there is, as *he* says, no neighbourhood. Perhaps it is the

better for us that he should be absent, as our flocks look up to us as the most important personages in our respective villages, which they would not do if our humble lights were eclipsed by the glare of a resident Lord of the Manor. We do all the good our small means allow us, and have starved out one lawyer, and made the parish doctor's place almost a sinecure. It is not improbable that one or two of my friends may claim a cut of my Southdown to-day, but, should it not prove so, you shall meet them before you leave us; I think you will like them. They have their eccentricities—as who has not? but they are good men, kind neighbours, and excellent pastors.”

“Whatever eccentricities *they* may have,” said I, “I am sure *you* have displayed none.”

“What?” said the vicar, smiling, “not in asking a perfect stranger, self-introduced—without any thing to recommend him but a gentlemanly appearance and good address—to dine with me?”

“I may be a Jesuit in disguise, or a Dis-senter, come to spy the nakedness of the land,

and convert your flock ; or the bishop's chaplain, or even the bishop himself, wishing to see *incog.* how the clergy conduct themselves in private, or an author, or”

“A rogue and vagabond come down to murder Shakspeare and inspire the clodpoles with a dramatic ardour. But I will run all risks, even if you have a design to take my likeness as a painter, or the half-dozen spoons which form my *plate*, as a regular house-breaker—so to dinner, or the trout will be spoiled.”

So saying, the vicar led the way by a zig-zag sheep-track down the hill, and that too at a pace which few men at his years could have kept up. We found, on our arrival, that we were just in time ; as a quiet old lady, whom he introduced to me as his sister, informed us, as she met us at the garden-gate, whence she had been anxiously surveying the path which led to the hill, in hopes of seeing us approach by it, ere the fish was spoiled by being overdone.

We had literally nothing but the trout and the leg of mutton, and yet I never made a

better dinner in my life. It might have been that the walk had sharpened my appetite, or that the cleanliness of every thing, and the brilliancy of the six table-spoons, with the excellent way in which the fish and joint were dressed, stimulated my gastric juices.

It might have been that the smiling children around me put me in mind of home, and gave a relish to my food. It might have been that the urgent pressings of Miss Woodward, who sat at the head of her brother's table, imposed upon me the necessity of exerting myself to show her that I could not refuse her solicitations : or it might have been the evident pleasure shown by the vicar at the way in which I did my duty to the viands ; or it might have been all these together, that excited me to feed so largely ; whatever it was, I certainly never made a heartier meal.

"Matilda, my dear, we must open a bottle of port-wine to-day, in honour of our guest," said the vicar, when the cloth was removed.

"Pardon me," said I, "do not put yourself to that. . . ."

"Expense, you would say, on your account,

and I appreciate your good feeling ; but I have a little stock by me, the gift of one of my neighbours, one of the five incumbents. The rector of Rushley goes to London for three months yearly to cultivate the acquaintance of some literary friends who spend the season in town, and, though I would gladly do his duty in his absence without remuneration, he will insist on my accepting a case of port-wine, which he delicately hints is good for mine often infirmities."

After this explanation of the mode in which the bin was stocked, I did not hesitate to do justice to the very excellent wine that was set before me. We were left alone, as Miss Woodward retired to attend to her household duties, and the children to learn their evening tasks. Our conversation was at first confined to our favourite sport, fishing ; but the vicar's account of the streams and trout of North Wales soon led him to talk of himself and his past life. When the bottle was emptied, I rose to retire, to enjoy an hour or two's whiping in the most capturing time of the day, and begged of the vicar to come up and sup

with me at the inn. This he declined, as he said that his sister would be offended if he did not insist upon my returning and tasting two or three little dishes which she was then, *sub rosa*, engaged in concocting for my especial enjoyment.

“And why not sleep here—take up your quarters with us altogether?” said the vicar.

“Because,” said I, “I have engaged my apartments for a week. Besides, I have an ugly ‘custom in the afternoon,’ to which Miss Woodward would strongly object. I indulge in my cigar and grog nightly.”

“Delightful!” said the vicar. “I, too, always smoke my pipe after our little supper; so you see you *must* come.”

I pleaded, and at length successfully, against this *non sequitur*. I was allowed to sleep at mine inn, upon condition that I made the vicarage my eating-house. I returned with a well-filled creel from the tumbling-bay, despatched four brace of the largest and best-conditioned fish by the mail to my friend, the Professor, and sat down to Miss Wood-

ward's *petit souper* with an appetite renewed by exercise and the fresh air.

After supper we illuminated; and as we smoked the fragrant weed, to which King James displayed so much enmity, merely because he could not smoke it, I learnt the history of my hospitable friend's life. It is a mere simple tale, and I shall let him tell it in his own way.

CHAPTER II.

I was born within a few miles of the venerable city of Chester. My father was possessed of a small farm and a large family. His sons, being agriculturally disposed, were allowed to follow the bent of their inclinations, and thus, by saving the expense of hired labourers, enriched the family. My sisters, too, were taught to make and mend the family linen, and assist their mother in the duties of the dairy and cheese-room. We were a very happy family, though we had not even a slipshod maid to wait upon us. It used to be the fashion in those days for boys and girls to work—to help their parents and each other—and the farm sufficed for their

support. How is it now? Mrs. Farmer Giles must have a cook and a kitchen-wench; Mr. Farmer Giles must have a man to look after his nag; and the little Gileses, instead of holding the plough and milking the kine, must have a dancing-master, and thrum on an upright piano. What has been the result? Their little farms, the freeholds left them by their forefathers, are amalgamated with the squire's estate; and, after trying to live as tenants where they *would* not live as landlords, they embark for Canada or Australia, to do the very thing that would have enabled them to live better on their own estates, had false pride permitted them to do it — wait upon themselves. By pride alone has the stream of emigration been set running and kept full.

Would that I could have shared the healthy labours of my brothers! — would that I could have driven plough, or even have kept guard over our flocks! I should have been spared much suffering, mental and bodily. I was born as strong and as sturdy as the sturdiest of the Woodwardes; but a fall from the arms

of a little sister, to whose care I had been imprudently entrusted, deprived me for a time of the use of my lower limbs, and stunted my growth.

As soon as I was old enough to understand my situation, I repined at my lot. It was not so much the being deprived of the power of motion, of roaming about the fields in the free air of heaven, that grieved me, though I felt that deprivation severely: it was the thought that I was a grievous burden to my family, a living reproach to my poor little sister, who spent hours in crying over the brother whom she had made a cripple. Though I was petted by all — though my father and brothers never returned from market without some toy or plaything for poor little William — though my sisters taught me to make patchwork, and to net and knit; and my mother, from those mysterious feelings which are unsearchable, beyond divination, lavished all her deepest love upon her weakest—the object of pity to all, of scorn to some—still I was truly miserable. She tried to comfort me, but I refused to be comforted. Vain

were her fond caresses — vain were the tears she shed, and the prayers she uttered over me. The dainties which her love suggested and her scanty purse supplied were ungratefully rejected by me. I was too proud to accept what I felt was bestowed upon me only because I was a cripple and unable to share the plain and homely food of those whose labour enabled them to enjoy what they earned.

Distressed at my distress — wretched because I was wretched — heart-broken at my miserable state, my mother, though nearly suffocated by her sobs, revealed the matter to our worthy curate. He understood and appreciated the grief she displayed, but chid her, gently indeed, but yet he chid her, for allowing her wounds to bleed without applying in humility to Him who alone could bestow upon her the balm that would heal them. He bade her go and pray, and to teach her son to pray. She tearfully obeyed, and, aided by his judicious instructions, opened to me a blessed source of comfort and joy. Peace was restored to the family; a

holy cheerfulness succeeded to a most unholy gloom.

When he had laid the foundation of contentment in my lot, that good man proceeded to build upon it the superstructure of usefulness to myself and family. He taught me to read and write, supplied me with books and materials for my studies ; and, when time and the skill of the surgeon enabled me to get about, he put me to the cathedral school at his own expense, though he could ill afford it.

I was truly grateful for his kindnesses, and worked hard to repay them. I succeeded in getting to the head of the school, and, ere he left this world for a better, he saw me elected off to an exhibition at Oxford, where he had secured me a kind reception by representing my case to the heads of the college.

I will not dwell on my university career ; I will only say that, though I recovered the use of my limbs, I was not strong enough to share in the exercises of my more robust companions, nor had I the means, if I had had the inclination, to join them in their revelries. I

passed my time in reading and angling by the quiet streams of the Isis and the Cherwell.

I tried to gain an university prize, but failed. It was a severe blow to me that failure. Had not the lessons taught me in early days by the kind curate recurred to me, I should have sunk under it. Although I did not succeed in gaining the prize, my exercise was so respectably done that, aided by a second class, it insured to me a pupil, the son of a gentleman in North Wales, to whom I was recommended by the head of my college.

As my exhibition had expired, and I had no chance of succeeding in any other profession but the church, I gladly availed myself of the offer of my patron's brother to undertake the duties of his curacy, which was near enough to "the house" to enable me to continue the tuition of his nephew. I was ordained, and took up my residence in the little cottage that was dignified by the name of the parsonage-house of Llyswenny, in the county of Merioneth. With this residence, a stipend of £55 per annum, and one pupil,

who paid me a guinea a-week, I was looked upon as a lucky and a wealthy man by my family and by myself.

Upon this my first year as a country curate, I look back as upon a bright green oasis in the desert of my long life. I was happy, cheerful, and healthy. Mind and body were alike employed. Yet, somehow or another, I began to think I was dull by myself. When I returned home from an excursion up the mountains, I had no one to whom I could talk of the views I had seen, the fish that I had caught, the thumpers that I had *not* caught, but would catch some other day. Then my solitary supper grew distasteful, and my nightly readings lost their relish. I found myself arguing with myself, that it would not cost more to keep *two* than it did to keep *one*. What mattered an additional crust off my little loaf? Would an extra slice be missed from my shoulder of mutton? The one spoonful of tea was quite enough for two. And then the trout I caught! oh, they would almost keep *our* table. The same fire would warm, the same bed would rest, the limbs of a

pair—would do duty for the dual as well as the singular number.

In this view of the subject I was aided and abetted by a very pretty girl, the daughter of one of my parishioners. Her father was a farmer, rich in twenty-five acres of arable land, and a right of common over a very extensive mountain. As two heads are proverbially better than one, we literally “laid our heads together” upon the same pillow; for having cordially agreed with me in my notion of the dual properties of loaves, shoulders of mutton, and fires, the argument that a married man was more likely to get resident pupils than a single man was so convincing, that I resolved to try the experiment. It succeeded, for, in addition to my patron’s nephew, I was entrusted with the care of a sickly scion of a Liverpool merchant, on whom, as the Liverpool faculty asserted, the air of our mountains would work wonders. It did operate miraculously, for in less than one fortnight it killed him. I never got another *resident* pupil, as the death of the poor little victim to consumption was attributed

by the doctors of Liverpool to the very unhealthy situation of the parsonage of Llys-wenny.

I did not repine. I had my one pupil and my curate's stipend still. I had a healthy, hardworking, cheerful friend and companion in my wife. She had a dowry too: three ponies and a brood mare, a cow and a flock of ten miniature muttons. These would have been very profitable had not the brood-mare absconded, and taken the three ponies with her; the cow cast her calf, and died under the hands of an unskilful cattle-doctor; and the sheep been attacked with an epidemic that first reduced them to skeletons, and then rendered them food for the crows, who had been cawing and croaking for weeks, impatient of the expected treat.

This was trying, but I did not repine. Though my farming had been unsuccessful, and my *res domesticæ* were reduced in number, there was every prospect of an increase in another way. This promise was fulfilled. I do not think a happier father than I ever

Welcomed to earth the mountain's child.

What was enough for two would be sure to satisfy three, was now my motto. The *dual* was succeeded by the *plural*, and it is the only way in which I ever enjoyed a plurality, or was convicted of being a pluralist.

Well, after my third child was born, my one pupil was deemed fit for college. I think the idea of his fitness was suggested by the worn-outness of the old pony on which he used to ride backwards and forwards from "the house" to the parsonage. He left me, however, for college; and, as his place was not filled up by another, I had to fall back upon my £55 per annum, which, as we were moderate in our desires, and had taken to making the most of my garden by cultivating cabbages and other esculents on an extended scale, we found more than enough, for we actually put by a few pounds yearly.

After I had resided on my cure for thirteen years, I found myself the father of twelve children—ay, and a happy father too. My stipend would not have supported us, had not my pupil, when he succeeded to his paternal estate, in gratitude for his success at college,

which he kindly attributed to my exertions, let me have a few acres of land, rent free. My second speculation in farming answered, for my boys looked after the stock, and the rich pasturage agreed with the cows and sheep much better than the stunted commons on which my wife's dowry were exposed.

Up to this period I had not repined at my lot. I had had no time to grumble, if I had felt inclined to do so. My hours were all occupied. I educated my children, cultivated my garden, superintended my flocks—rational and irrational—and waged war upon the trout. My wife had enough to do to provide clothing and clean linen for her family, besides converting cream into butter and curds into cheese. Still we were happy until sickness invaded our little crowded garrison. Fever found a stronghold for his troops. He took up his quarters among us, and was soon followed by his usual comrade—death.

Four of my little ones yielded to their combined attacks, and my wife sunk into a state of despondency but little removed from despair. The hand that took away also in

its mercy gave. A thirteenth child was born. The mother's grief for her lost ones was assuaged. The care of providing for the living conquered her regret for the dead. The blow, however, had been struck, from which her constitution never entirely recovered. She was weakened by her last confinement, for her sufferings had been greater than any she had before experienced. She lost much of her cheerfulness; and, though a sense of duty urged her to the discharge of her domestic toils, the task was done as a task, and not with the willingness she had hitherto displayed. Duty was no longer pleasure.

For nine long tedious years she grew weaker and weaker. She gradually resigned her household cares to my eldest unmarried daughter, who had less to do than her mother had had, as two of my boys had left us, the one for the army, into which he volunteered, and the other for the navy, into which my old pupil's interest was powerful enough to get him admittance. My eldest girl was married to a neighbouring curate, as poor as

myself, but who would marry, although I tried to convince him that my theory of the non-additional expensiveness of duality was wrong. We were only five at home, for one of my younger boys was apprenticed to a watchmaker ; my eldest boy was bailiff on a farm in the neighbourhood, and one of my girls was staying with her married sister.

Our expenses, however, were not decreased. What we saved by the absence of mouths, we lost by the presence of medicines. Our doctor, who was a good, kind creature, and would have supplied medicines and attendance gratuitously if he could have afforded it, saw the struggles we were making to save the partner of my joys and sorrows. He called as seldom as he could, unless a neighbouring patient called him in, and enabled him to pay what he termed a *friendly* visit. He would also suggest to an invalid at "the house" that such and such things which he administered there would be of service at the parsonage ; and, in short, he endeavoured to save me as much expense as possible, by obeying the apostle's order to "*charge* them that are *rich* ;" but

still his bills were serious things for me to discharge. They made a deep impression upon my £55 stipend and the profits of the farm.

I had some idea that I might add to my small means by publishing a volume of sermons which, as the players say, had been listened to by an admiring audience, and received with unbounded applause. I thought that a liberal and discerning public might appreciate them, and turn the goose from whose pinion the pen that wrote them was taken into a goose with golden eggs. I consulted an eminent London publisher on the subject. His answer was :—

“ Rev. Sir,

“ Divinity is a drug, unless the author is an unorthodox bishop, or a martyr to anti-church-of-England principles.

“ Your obedient servant,

“ ——— ———.”

As I had had enough of *drugs*, I declined the dissemination of divinity in a printed form. I resolved to rub on as I had hitherto done,

and, though oppressed by illness, and pressed by my wants, to leave the press to the more fortunate individuals alluded to in the bookseller's letter.

"William, dear," said my wife, as I deposited her in her easy chair by the fireside, for she was now unable to walk from the bedroom to the parlour — "William, dear, I fear you are tired of your office of nurse?"

"No, love, not tired of nursing, but tired of"

"Paying the doctor, and other expenses," said my wife.

"That is unkind. I was going to add, tired of not seeing you mend. As for expenses, what care I, so long as we can live and be happy?" said I, as cheerfully as I could.

"But your privations, William? they are great. You deprive yourself not only of every little indulgence, but of many necessities, and all to no purpose. My sentence is recorded; all your kind struggles are in vain. Grant me, dear William, one request. I know you will—will you not?"

"That query implies a doubt," said I, tak-

ing her emaciated hand, "but any reasonable request I will grant."

"Well, then, tell Dr. Williams not to call again or send any more medicines."

"No, no; while there is life there is hope. As long as I can gain a shilling, that shilling shall be expended to save, if possible, her who has been the partner of all my joys and sorrows. No, no. I am rich as long as my stipend is paid me (and the rector is a hearty man); and as long as my little farm goes on, and the dear children are healthy. I only wish to be richer that you might have your little indulgences, and be removed hence to a warmer clime, to try the effect of change of air."

"Were you worth hundreds, William, I would not move hence. Here we have passed many happy hours — here I may truly say I have *lived*, and here would I die — for die I must, and that ere many months have rolled on. Do now, do dismiss the doctor."

This request was spoken in so urgent a manner, and the look that accompanied the words carried conviction to my heart so for-

cibly of his attentions being worse than useless, that I had almost resolved to consent to his dismissal; however, “never *say* die” occurred to me, and I resolved to expend the riches of my cure and farm on the only *man* in that remote region who could cheat death of his prey.

Alas! little did I think that the time had arrived when my riches were to make themselves wings and fly away.

The post came in as we were at our frugal dinner — a rasher of bacon and a few mashed turnips — I see the meal now! Rarely did I receive a letter, and the receipt of one then with a large black seal upon it threw me into a perspiration. I *knew* it brought ill news before I opened it, though I knew not the handwriting nor the post-mark. I left the room, hurried into my garden, and broke the seal: the contents were these:—

“Reverend Sir,

“My kind master, the rector of Llyswenny, died this morning in a fit. I hasten to tell you of his death, as you might like to ask the

Lord Chancellor for the living of which you have been the curate for so many years. The squire might help or advise you.

“Your obedient servant,
“JOHN PRICE WILLIAMS.”

Poor Williams, who had thus shown his gratitude for some former trifling favours, was a second or third cousin of our doctor. The news he so thoughtfully conveyed to me by the agency of the medical man who was summoned to his master's aid, for he could not write himself, had a fearful effect upon me. I believe that I felt as if stricken with apoplexy, as my good rector had been, but I have no remembrance of any thing that passed until I found myself in our little garden, with my wife and family weeping around me. I can recollect distinctly the misery which was then depicted on the brow of all of them, excepting my wife, who smiled upon me, and bade me hope, for that she *felt* my application would be successful.

“My application!—to whom?—for what?” said I.

“To the Chancellor—he is a great and a good man—and for this living, where you have done the duties so long and so well,” said my wife; “sit down and write to him—tell him a simple story, and make a plain request—you *must* succeed.”

“No, father,” said my girl, “do no such thing; go up to ‘The House;’ the squire is your friend, solicit him to apply for you.”

“Ay, go, father—go, dear William—go, dear father,” exclaimed the whole of my loving and beloved circle.

In a few minutes, my best hat and coat and a clean cravat were put upon me without any effort on my part; my sturdy walking-stick was placed in my hands, and before I knew where I was going I found myself in the squire’s study, and telling him all my hopes and fears. He advised me to apply for the living, but said that he could not aid me, as he had acted in opposition to the administration on the last election.

“You would do better, however,” said he, “if you could apply in person; but I do not see how you can leave home on account of

your wife's ill health ; as to expenses, my purse is yours on such an occasion."

I believe I thanked him as he deserved ; I know he shook me by the hand ; but my heart was sunken in my breast. I felt the weight of despondency on my brain. I reeled to the home I was sure I must shortly leave—to the wife and children who would soon be houseless. I saw not and consequently could not regard the looks of commiseration with which my parishioners, who had heard the news of the rector's death, viewed me as I passed their dwellings. I reached home — I was sick, ill, and fainted.

On my recovery, I told all that I could recollect of what had passed at "The House" to my sorrowing family. Despair reigned triumphant over us all, until the lessons of my youth occurred to me, and I bent the knee and the heart in prayer. I took myself right humbly to my God.

In the midst of the gloom of night, when my sleepless eyes were watching the broken and spasmodic sleep of my poor wife, she sud-

denly roused herself, and taking me by the hand said,—

“ William, dear, I have had a dream ; you must, for the last time, indulge me in a request I am about to make in consequence of that dream. Do not deem me mad or foolish, but go to London ; set off early to morrow morning, and apply to Lord E——, the Chancellor, in person for this living. You will succeed—it has been revealed to me.”

I listened to her dream — her firm reliance on its fulfilment inspired me with hope. I resolved to go, but to tell no soul of the object of my journey.

I rose ere it was light. I had five golden guineas hoarded up. I took three of them, which I resolved should suffice for a journey of nearly three hundred miles.

I kissed my dear wife, who smiled upon me more cheerfully than she had done for months, and with a heavy heart set out. I had merely a change of linen in my great-coat pocket and a cotton umbrella to carry, and I felt that I was strong enough to walk the whole way. As I closed the gate of my garden behind me,

my thoughts were as gloomy as the morning, which was foggy and cloudy. When I reached the top of the hill which overhung my home, the mist was dispelled, and the sun burst forth in all its splendour. I hailed it as a happy omen, and, ere I lost sight of the humble dwelling that still sheltered my loved ones, I fell on my knees and commended them to our common Father, and prayed for a blessing on my journey.

By getting a ride now and then, and by keeping on at a steady walk, I reached on the third day what had been the home of my childhood, and to visit this home I travelled miles out of my regular course.

My parents had been long dead, but my eldest brother, now an aged man, still cultivated the farm. He received me with open arms; but when I told him of the object of my journey, he shook his head, and gave me no encouragement. As he saw I was resolved to go, he introduced me to the curate of the parish, who, as he had had a cure in London for twelve months, was supposed to know a great deal about great people.

He, worthy man, laughed outright at my simplicity in fancying that I should gain access to the Lord Chancellor without friends, without even a letter of introduction or recommendation. He gave me a great deal of advice on the humble and courteous manner in which I was to conduct myself *if* I did succeed in gaining the great man's presence, and, what was of more value to me, he gave me a note to a friend of his who had a living a few miles beyond Liverpool.

I set out again. My brother, I imagine, thought I was well provided with money, for he did not offer to supply me with any. I felt it as an unkindness, but I was too proud to ask for assistance ; indeed, I did not think that I should need it, as I had only spent two shillings of my store.

I crossed the Mersey, and reached the house of the clergyman to whom I had the note of introduction. He treated me kindly, gave me bed and board and a letter to a friend, a brother parson, in Birmingham. He too behaved as a brother, and furnished me with letters to others of our profession whose homes lay in

my path. Thus was I passed, like a pauper as I was, from parish to parish.

But I will not weary you with the particulars of my tedious, roundabout journey, my privations, my exertions, my hopes and fears; suffice it to say that, in my most desponding moments, my poor, sick wife's smile of hope revived me. Often, when I had sunk down exhausted with long walking, and had almost resolved to give up my plans and return home again, the idea of that home and its inhabitants revived me and gave me strength to persevere.

On the twelfth day, early in the morning, I arrived in London. I had but three shillings left; but then I had a silver watch, the gift of my son, the first fruits of his skill in the trade.

I took it to a silversmith in St. John Street, and begged him to lend me some money upon it. He eyed me and the watch suspiciously; but, when I told him my tale briefly, he not only lent me £3, but, with tears in his eyes, invited me to breakfast with him. He also furnished the means of making my appear-

ance more respectable, as my clothes had suffered from my journeying, sometimes in the wet, at others in the dust.

Before the clocks had struck ten, I found myself trembling with exhaustion and anxiety at the door of the Lord Chancellor in — Square. I knocked timidly, and begged the porter to tell his lordship that I wished to speak to him.

The man stared, and, after a few moments' hesitation, asked me for my card.

My card ! I had not had such a thing in my possession since I had settled down at Llyswenny.

" I have not a card with me," said I ;
" but my name is Woodward."

" Are you known to his lordship?"

" A perfect stranger," said I.

" Have you no note — no letter of introduction?"

" None," said I, sighing.

" I fear then," said the porter, very civilly,
" that I cannot admit you. You had better write to his lordship, and if your business re-

quires an interview he will fix the hour for you to attend."

"I am a poor clergyman," said I. "I have walked up from Wales to solicit a favour of his lordship."

"Walked all the way from Wales? Step in. I will speak to his lordship's secretary."

I entered the hall; and, while the porter was gone on his errand, I sunk exhausted on a chair. My knees trembled so I could not stand.

In a few minutes the man returned, and bade me follow him into a small parlour near the door. I found a gentleman standing there, dressed in a court-suit of black. He told me to be seated, spoke kindly to me, and asked me my business.

I told him as concisely as I could, and expressed a hope that his lordship would not refuse to see me.

I fancied—it might have been nought but fancy—that a tear stood in his eye. He certainly raised his handkerchief to his face, coughed several times, and turned away from me.

He left the room without replying to me, and, in a short time, though it seemed an hour to me, returned and told me that Lord E—— would see me.

I was shown into a large room furnished with well-stored book-shelves, library-tables, and reading-chairs. I saw a small, benevolent-looking man sitting at one of the tables, almost obscured by masses of papers, and nearly hidden by the arms and back of a library-chair.

“The Lord Chancellor,” said the secretary, as he left the room.

The moment had arrived that was to decide my fate. I had got up a set speech by heart, and tried to utter it. I could not speak. I essayed to do so, but a giddiness came over me, my ideas were confused, my tongue refused its office, and I felt as if I was dying.

I have no recollection of what passed, until, on opening my eyes and gazing round me, I found his lordship and his secretary standing at my side, and a servant bathing my temples with cold water.

I apologized as well as I could for giving so much trouble. His lordship begged me to be calm, and, when the secretary and the servant had left us, told me not to flutter myself, but to tell him my business.

I told him all; my poverty, my length of service in the parish, my wife's dying state, my struggles to support my large family, my hopes and fears, the particulars of my journey, and concluded by begging of him to confer upon me the vacant living of Llys-wenny.

He heard me without interrupting me, but I saw through my own tears that the moisture from his eyes trickled down his cheek, and fell upon the papers that lay before him. I felt comfort from the sight, for I had excited his sympathy.

At length he spoke in a low, melodious voice.

"I regret, dear sir, to say that the living of Llyswenny, for which you ask, and to which your services, as curate, give you a claim, was given away ten days since. My friend Sir Robert — applied on behalf of

a man of whom he spoke in such high terms, that I immediately gave him the presentation. Why did not you apply, by letter, as soon as you heard of the vacancy?"

"I did not dare presume so far, my lord," I replied.

"And yet you presumed to ask for an interview, and found courage to make your request in person, without introduction, without even a letter of recommendation."

"I thought, my lord, it would be more respectful, more dutiful."

"To leave a sick, a dying wife, your home and your children, to expend your small means, and exhaust your strength on a long journey, with the hope of gaining access to a person so notoriously difficult of access as a Lord Chancellor, when you might have saved all the trouble and expense by doing as hundreds do, who have not half the claims you have, writing and almost demanding the vacant benefice! Well, well—I am sorry I cannot reward your modesty and your toils—Llys-wenny is disposed of."

"Would your lordship ask the successful

applicant, the new rector, to continue me as his curate? I will undertake it even at a smaller sum. I will struggle long and hard, do any thing rather than remove my wife from the home she loves so well. She cannot long survive, and, when she is gone, I will quit the spot, wander forth, and settle where Providence may be pleased to appoint my widowed lot."

"I must again regret," said Lord E——, "that I cannot interfere in the matter. But write to the rector yourself; state your case as simply and as plainly as you have stated it to me. You may add, that *I* advised you to do so. My secretary will furnish you with his address. Write to me, and let me know the result of your application; and now go home again, comfort your sick wife, cherish your dear children, and trust in Him who will not suffer the righteous to be forsaken, nor his seed to beg their bread."

I rose to leave him, a ruined, a broken-hearted man.

"Stay one moment," said his lordship.

I stood in the middle of the library, but

my heart was in the mountains of Wales. I saw my home—now no longer my home—my wife dying, my children in despair.

I was roused from my wretched dream by his lordship. He touched my arm gently, put into my hand a small pocket Bible, tied round with a piece of office-tape.

“Accept,” said he, “this copy of *the Book*. When you get to your lodgings, open it—I have marked a page in it; I trust you may find consolation from its contents—adieu! Write to me when you get home and have communicated with your rector.”

I left the room and the house. I wandered I scarcely knew whither. I cared not what became of me, for the darkness of despair was on my soul. I shudder to think that I even meditated self-murder.

“Why should I live?” said I. “Where am I to find hope or consolation now?”

Something fell at my feet—I looked down; it was the Bible, the gift of Lord E——. I was answered.

Inspired with hope, I sought the house of the kind silversmith. I told him of my failure,

I opened it in fear and trembling, for I was a poor, nervous, shattered creature. It ran thus :

“ Dear Sir,

“ I am happy to tell you that the Lord Chancellor has appointed you to the vacant vicarage of Clearstream, in the county of Hants, value £230 per annum, with a house. You will find the necessary papers at the Presentation-office in the Temple, and I wish you joy of your preferment.

“ I am, dear Sir,

“ Yours faithfully,

“ ——— ———

“ Secretary of Presentations.”

This sudden step from poverty and want to what appeared to me unbounded, inexhaustible riches, proved too much for me. I was so ill that I could not even write to thank my kind patron for his bounty.

Joy, however, seldom kills us ; I recovered, sold my little stock, and, with my three youngest children, and my sister, who kindly superintends my household, removed to this

spot, where I have been and am as happy as a mortal can be in this our world below.

I need hardly tell you that as long as Lord E—— lived, his name was never forgotten in my prayers.

“ I wish I was a Lord Chancellor,” said I to myself, when the vicar had ended his tale. “ I envy every man who has it in his power to make another happy. How soundly Lord E—— must have slept that night when he bestowed £50 on this worthy man ! and yet the world called him parsimonious—stingy ! Bah !”

Having got rid of this bit of spleen, I turned to examine my pipe—something had “ put my pipe out.” Water extinguishes fire, and I believe my eyes had been “ doing Niobe ” at the vicar’s joys and woes. I did not relight it, but went home and fell asleep, after I had offered up a prayer for the welfare of the good and single-minded vicar of Clearstream. I really believe I left my grog unfinished ; but my kind friend, the Professor, says, he has strong doubts about *that* part of my story. Does he judge of me by himself ?

CHAPTER III.

On the morning following the recital of the Vicar of Clearstream's adventures, I rose with the lark, and sallied forth, like a schoolmaster, rod in hand.

As the trout-rose at the same time, and my flies fell killingly on the surface of the river, I soon filled my creel. After weighing and inspecting each fish individually, and under the advice of mine host selecting the best-conditioned, I carried them with me to the vicarage, where, as the reader will be pleased to remember, I had promised to take my meals.

I was greeted with nods and becks and wreathed smiles by the vicar and his children,

who, the morning task being ended, were waiting in the garden to receive me.

Miss Woodward was busily engaged in preparing the morning meal, and, as soon as we had exchanged courtesies, the signal was given that all was ready, and we took our seats.

I do not know how it is, but I can never enjoy a London breakfast. The hot rolls smell of green baize, and look like Smyrna sponges; the white bread seems arid, and reminds one of dead men's bones and bean-flour; the butter is served up in such very diminutive pats, that it seems to hint at its costliness, and beg you to be sparing in the use of it; the tea tastes of Thames water, with a dash of the flavour caused by the last corpse that was picked up, after being dragged for for several days, just opposite the Penitentiary at Millbank. As for a London egg, though you do get your chicken into the bargain, a man must be cracked who ventures to crack the shell of one, unless he is a comparative anatomist, or a positive fool; the broiled ham, as

they call it, is a gross insult to all the Bacon family ; and the coffee, a compound of burnt beans and chicory, is rendered more filthy by being infused in a patent filterer, which allows all the filth, and none of the flavour, to run through it ; as to milk—bah ! — *whiting and water*—it is a most unenticing meal to me—a London breakfast.

Miss Woodward had prepared for us a very different sort of feast. We had home-made bread, white and brown, oven cakes, as sweet and as light as Love himself, a large supply of freshly-made butter, with eggs newly laid, and ready to burst their shells from the milky fluid within them : the cream was almost of the consistency of butter, and, like undergraduate port-wine, refused to be poured out. Then the tea, good of its sort, used liberally, and infused in the pure water that trickled through the gravel rocks above us, and filtered itself, was delicious. The coffee, newly roasted and ground, made after the olden fashion, and supplied hot from the coffee-pot, filled the parlour with its refreshing odour. The more

solid part of the meal consisted of rashers of streaked bacon nicely toasted—not broiled; a brace of trouts grilled, and covered with bread crumbs and chopped mushrooms; a large dish of crayfish, for which Clearstream is justly renowned, and a collared eel, which would have provoked the appetite of an anchorite, and caused him to regret, if not forget, his vow as an herb-and-water-totaller. Good as every thing was, it was doubtless rendered better by a three hours' fishing in the open air of a bracing summer's morning.

"*Fiat justitia*," said I, internally; and justice *was* done internally.

I had engaged a four-wheeled carriage, which mine host called "a pheayton," and had arranged to drive the vicar and his children over to Winchester, wishing to see the cathedral and other old buildings, for which that town and its neighbourhood are justly celebrated. I had, moreover, selected a bright sovereign, and placed it apart from its companions, as a tip for the son of an old and valued friend, who was studying his humanities in William of Wykeham's college — that

is, he was learning to spear trout, spin cock-chafers, bait cats, and draw badgers.

L'homme propose—Dieu dispose.

The children were dressing themselves in their best, the vicar was putting on an immaculate white tie, and I was looking out for Boots, who, in his other character of ostler, had promised to bring down the chaise—trap is, I believe, more correct — when an exceedingly neat landaulet, drawn by a pair of fat and well-fed steeds, and driven by an unctuous and malt-inflamed-faced coachman, was whirled up to the vicarage-gate at the rate of three miles and a half an hour.

The carriage was occupied, I might almost say filled, by a magnificent specimen of a full-grown and flourishing divine — for there was no mistaking his profession. He wore a most correct and carefully-cut frock, shorts, and silks, with buckles—large, solid, silver buckles—at his knees and on his instep. His throat was encircled with a fine white stock, and on his hair, which was slightly mixed with grey, or slightly powdered, I could hardly tell

which, he wore a hat, which, though not decidedly a shovel, displayed a disposition to emulate and imitate the cut episcopal or archidiaconal.

As I was a stranger to him, I retreated from the gate, and walked slowly along the shrubbery, which ran parallel with the road. Though not partial to eaves-dropping, I could not help hearing the following dialogue, as both master and man were blessed with loud voices ; although the former spoke in a fine sonorous bass, and the latter whistled out his words in a snuffing choky kind of treble.

“ Haugh — humph ! — eh ? Zachariah — Zachariah Bond — why — eh ? Why do you stand there ? ” said the master.

“ Ben’t standing—’cause I’m sitting — eeh — eeh ! ” replied the man.

“ Why the dickens—eh ? Haugh—humph ! Why don’t you descend and inquire if my friend, Mr. Woodward, is at home — eh ? ” continued the master, slightly rapping the bottom of the carriage with his amber-headed walking-stick, which he used as a resting-place for his hands.

"Whoah—who-oh! Don't you be in such a mortal hurry—got the whole day before us. Gently, there, Juggenel—steady there, Brown Bury—take it easy, you fiery rogues—nothing got by hurrying," said the man, addressing his cumbrous master and more cumbrous steeds, without deigning to turn his head.

"Zachariah—Zachariah Bond—humph—haugh!—eh? Do you mean to do as I bid you?" inquired the master, in louder tones, accompanied by a louder rap of the bamboo.

"By and by—lots of time—who-oh! You've earned your oats, my cherubs—take it easy," said Zachariah.

"Well, this is abominable—haugh! humph!! Am I to get down myself?—eh? answer me that, Zachariah—Zachariah Bond!"

"No occasion to move," said Zachariah, as he rose from the box, slowly and deliberately. "I *must* get down, for Juggenel's got a fly on his flank, and his swish tail ain't long enough by two inches to flick it off. Whoah—who-oh, my cherubs, I'm a coming—gently, Brown Bury—take it easy—lots of time."

The master smiled goodnaturedly when he saw his servant begin to descend, and, during the five minutes which were consumed in the operation, merely uttered one, "Humph—haugh!"

Zachariah, however, instead of going in at the garden-gate to inquire for the vicar, stood and gazed at his steeds, examining all their points as minutely as if he had never seen them before, and only had them out on trial. Then he gave his thigh a hearty slap, and, looking at his master for the first time, said inquiringly :—

"Ain't them beauties? — ain't I done my duty by 'em?"

The master put his head out at the side of the carriage, and, after first surveying the off horse, and then the near horse carefully, replied :—

"Beautiful—very beautiful—well-fed, and well curried — now, Zachariah — haugh — humph! — you may as well inquire for Mr. Woodward—eh?"

"Whoah—who-oh — my cherubs — gently there—no hurry—lots of time—now for that

'ere fly," said Zachariah, as he stole on tiptoe towards the insect, which, after taking aim with uplifted hand for five minutes, he succeeded in immolating by a thump, which would have broken the ribs of any horse not so well protected with fat as Juggenel was. Then he walked round to the side of Brown Bury, and, after ascertaining by a prolonged examination that there was not another fly to be sacrificed, he patted both his nags very affectionately — begged them to stand quite still — be gentle — not to be in a hurry, for there was lots of time—he walked backwards towards the gate, as if he was afraid of losing sight of his cattle.

Whether he would have progressed backwards towards the door of the vicarage, I cannot say, as his progress was prevented by my friend, who, having completed his toilet, hastened out to greet his visiter, and announced his presence to Zachariah, by asking him how he did.

Zachariah, without turning round to look at the vicar, replied, "Pretty tolerable, Mr. Woodward, considering the pace we're come.

Master is always in *such* a hurry! but never mind—don't hurry—lots of time—he'll keep. Just you come and look at Juggenel and Brown Bury—ain't they beautiful? ain't they earned their oats? ain't I done my duty by 'em? who-oh — you fiery rogues! I'm a-co-ming."

Mr. Woodward pushed Zachariah on one side, and, opening the door, and letting down the steps of the carriage, assisted the master to dismount, while the servant, without turning his head to see if his assistance was required, quietly surveyed his favourites, and assured them there was no hurry, but lots of time.

I was soon summoned from the shrubbery, and introduced to the new arrival as Mr. Worthington, the rector of Rushley. My name, and the object of my visit to Clearstream, were made known to him. He shook me kindly by the hand, and hoped I had been successful in my sport.

Now there was nothing peculiar in this hope—it was what I might have expected; but the words were accompanied with such a

peculiar wink of the left eye, that it seemed to imply, "You have not caught a single fish, and are not likely to catch one."

I replied that I had had excellent sport.

"Humph—haugh!—eh? not caught a cold, I hope."

This again was, I doubt not, a sincere wish on his part—but the wink, which was fiercer than before, seemed to convert his meaning into:—"I am sure you have a sore throat, a violent catarrh, and an incipient rheumatic fever."

I felt rather uncomfortable. I hardly knew what to be at. Was he a wag, and ought I to laugh at a joke poked, as the Yankees say, at myself, or did he mean to insult me? I looked at his face. It was so placid, calm, and benevolent-looking, that I at once dismissed the last query from my thoughts, and smiled blandly, as I replied that I never caught cold in fishing, as I was well protected with waterproofs.

"Exceedingly glad to hear it — humph — haugh!—eh? Capital things are waterproofs, Mr. Woodward; some persons doubt their

existence, *I don't,*" said the rector, as he winked, as much as to say, "*it's all a hum.*"

I watched the vicar's face, to see what effect the wink would have on him. He seemed not to observe it. I then thought it possible that they were conspiring against me to turn me into ridicule. I did not show my anger, though I felt angry, but resolved to bide my time, and, if I saw any decided attempt to annoy me, to express my opinion freely on their rudeness, and then cut the connexion.

Just as I had made this wise resolution, I heard the noise of wheels, and saw Boots coming up with the "*pheayton.*" When he drew up near the rector's carriage, and as closely as he could to the garden-gate, Zachariah, who seemed thunderstruck at his impudence in daring to come nigh his cattle with a hack horse, who might have the glanders, or any other catchable disorder, for aught he knew, screeched out:—

"Who-oh there, fellow! Take it easy—no hurry—lots of time—steady, my cherubs—gently, you fiery rogues—keep off—pull in your ringboned, spavined, glandered *hack.*"

Boots, who knew his man, and wished to provoke him, drove his hack close up to the side of the off cherub, and gave a peculiar chuck, chuck, chuck with his tongue.

This set Juggenel and Brown Bury moving; and, when Zachariah ran to their heads, and cried out, "Who-oh! my cherubs—steady, you fiery rogues—lots of time," Boots, as I could plainly see, gave them a cut across their loins, which set them prancing in a manner that astonished Zachariah, who evidently "did not think it was in them."

He held on tightly by their bits, and addressed them and the offending ostler at the same time.

"Steady there, Juggenel—you boot-cleaning brute—take it easy, Brown Bury—gently, my cherubs—you've earned your oats—you hack-scraping, corn-stealing, horse-teeth-greasing rascal—no hurry—lots of time—you fiery rogues—ain't they beautiful?—you bag-man-cheating, mane-and-tail docker, how dare you hit my cherubs? Ain't we come the pace? gently there—who-oh—I'll lay my whip across

your loins, get your nose in a twitch, and screw it out of your ugly face."

Boots replied with a loud laugh, and Zachariah shouted for his master.

Mr. Worthington strutted down to the gate, and, being informed by his man that the dirty fellow in the hack-shay had almost made Juggenel and Brown Bury run off and smash the carriage to pieces, and that he himself had nearly been kicked into four quarters, in trying to prevent so melancholy a catastrophe, the rector told Boots that "he was a very badly-conducted young man, and that he should tell his master, and get him removed from his situation."

Though this was seriously, nay, solemnly spoken, I thought it was all a joke, and that he was glad to see his impudent servant tormented, because the words were accompanied by the provoking winks I have mentioned.

Boots was evidently not of my opinion; for he looked very sheepish, and moved off to a respectful-distance on the opposite side of the road.

"I knew I should be pertected," said Za-

chariah, triumphantly, and patting his now quiet steeds. "If I hadn't a been purtected, I'd have given master his discharge, and taken a fresh un—no hurry, though—lots of time."

Mr. Woodward had by this time joined us. He explained to the rector our plans for the day, and invited him to share the dinner at the vicarage.

Mr. Worthington would not listen to such an arrangement. He had a plan of his own, and thus explained it after he had sent back "the pheayton" without consulting me.

"I came over to ask you to dine with me, my friend. I have had a most beautiful turbot sent me, with two fine lobsters, one full of coral and the other of berries—fine and fresh—(a wink, which convinced me that they wanted dressing). I have a fine quarter of lamb, and the first gathering of peas out of my own garden—(another wink, which clearly implied Covent Garden to me). These, with a spring chicken and asparagus, will form your dinner. I shall be proud to see your friend, Mr. Scribbler—(meaning me)—with you. I shall feel honoured by the company

of a stranger, who appears so gentlemanly and agreeable a person. Haugh—humph!—eh? Mr. Woodward?"

I bowed of course, but rather stiffly, as the movement of the left eyelid, which was more prolonged than usual, gave to his words the expression of the keenest irony.

"Then—humph—haugh!—eh? it is settled. The children shall not be disappointed of their ride—Mr. Scribbler shall see Winchester—beautiful building the cathedral—eh? Nice men, the dean and canons—amiable prelate the bishop—eh?—(A wink, hinting that they were just the reverse.) Come, we are all ready—jump in—eh? Zachariah—Zachariah Bond, I say, eh? Drive to Winchester—humph! haugh!"

Zachariah, who had allowed us to take our seats without offering to assist us or even turning his head towards us, suffered the reins to slip through his hands sufficiently to enable him to reach the carriage-door. He stood still, and, keeping his eyes fixed on his cherubs, coolly said, "Not upon no account."

“ Eh ? — what ? — Zachariah — Zachariah Bond—humph—haugh ! what do you mean ? ”

“ I mean that them ere fiery rogues — as has earnt their oats already, ain’t a-going to go to Winchester to-day — five miles and a-half of it, and all against collar. Who-oh ! my cherubs, easy does it — no hurry—lots of time—that’s all I mean,” said Mr. Bond.

“ You are a rude, disobliging menial—you shall quit my service—I’ll—yes—eh?—humph ! haugh ! I’ll drive myself, and leave you to walk home — you — you very disobliging menial.”

Zachariah could not have seen the motion of the eyelid which terminated this angry speech, for he was as usual eyeing his horses ; but he answered as if he had, and said—

“ No, you won’t.”

“ Won’t, sirrah ! I will — eh ? open the door.”

“ Gently there — easy does it—no hurry—lots of time. I ain’t a-going to trust you to drive these fiery rogues — your neck’s a deal too precious — you ain’t a-going to leave the

world yet, and be made a cherubim of—no hurry—lots of time—who-oh!”

“Will you drive to Winchester, or will you not? Zachariah—Zachariah Bond—humph!—haugh!—eh?” said the rector, very angrily, and winking with wonderful rapidity.

“Do you want to go there? Then of course I will. But easy does it. Juggenel and Brown Bury don’t start on such a journey without having a lock of hay and their mouths washed out.”

“Very right, very proper; I like a man to be kind to his beasts. Zachariah Bond is a very good servant, Mr. Scribbler, an excellent servant; he does his duty, but he likes to do it in his own way. Humph! haugh! Eh! Mr. Woodward?”

I was so tickled at this remark that I believe I imitated the rector, and winked, for he looked at me, then at the bottom of the carriage, fidgeted in his seat, and blushed.

Zachariah Bond, after feeding his horses with half a truss of hay, and giving them a bucket of water between them, with a little meal stirred up in it, condescended to mount

the box and drive us to Winchester, which we reached in about an hour and a half, as he got down at every little rising in the road to ease his cattle, and wanted us to do the same. He drove into the inn-yard, and commenced taking out his horses, leaving us to the care of the waiters and ostlers.

After viewing the cathedral, the college, and the hospital of St. Cross, and looking at the paper in the reading-room, where we met several divines, at whom the rector winked without, to my surprise, their taking the least notice of his peculiarity, we returned to the inn. We found Zachariah sitting on a bench in an arbour in the inn-yard, with a pipe in his mouth, and a jug of ale before him.

The waiter called out, "Mr. Worthington's carriage—put-to directly, coachman."

"Gently there; easy does it; no hurry; lots of time," said Mr. Bond, turning the ashes out of his pipe. "I'm going to have nine corns more, and then Juggenel and Brown Bury will have digested their corn; they've earned their oats to-day."

"Very right, very proper. I like a man

to be kind to his beasts — humph ! haugh ! Eh, Mr. Scribbler ? ” said the rector, winking, as if he knew it was of no use to hurry a man who had “ lots of time ” before him.

As we walked up and down before the inn, waiting the coachman’s pleasure, I took the opportunity of asking the rector why it was that his carriage-horses bore such very odd names as Juggenel and Brown Bury.

He explained to me that Zachariah, in addition to holding the office of groom and coachman, was also head-gardener. His favourite pursuit was pruning fruit-trees, and of these trees his great favourites were two very large pear-trees, the one a Jargonelle, and the other a Brown Beurré, which grew against the walls of the parsonage. Zachariah had reared them from their infancy—their little *pearhood*—and was so proud of his success in rearing them, that he insisted on calling the new carriage-horses after their names.

This explanation being interrupted with many winks, humphs ! haughs ! and ehs ?

lasted until Juggenel and Brown Bury were driven out of the yard. We embarked again; and whether it was that the horses knew they were going to their stables, or that their driver had the "spur in his head," I knew not, but we were whirled along at the frightful pace of at least six miles in the hour, and arrived at Rushley full half an hour before dinner-time.

An aged footman came out to open the carriage-door, and as soon as the rector was down said,

"Don't stand looking at the horses, but go in and dress. You'll be late else, and Mrs. Trusty will not let you hear the last of it if the turbot's overboiled, and the lamb over-roasted."

"Very right, Benjamin, very proper. I like a man that is attentive to his master—eh? Mr. Scribbler, humph! haugh! eh?" said the rector. "I'm coming, Benjamin, immediately."

"Easy does it," said Zachariah. "Gently there; no hurry; lots of time; just see, Jug-

genel and Brown Bury haven't turned a hair—ain't we earnt our oats—ain't we done our duties?"

The rector seemed inclined to gratify the wishes of Zachariah, and was on the point of turning to take a closer view of the horses that had done such wonders, when a sharp shrill voice reached his ear, which made him hurry away, though he was assured that there was "lots of time."

"Highty-tighty; here indeed — dinner nearly ready, and you not dressed. I must give up—I must look out—advertise—do something or other—all I try to do! gracious me! well, well! Benjamin, have you told your master?"

These words proceeded from a tall, thin, upright female, who stood on the hall steps, and looked as if she had been inoculating crab-apples for the sours, and caught the infection during the operation.

Mr. Worthington made a most humble apology, and promised to be ready in ten minutes. He was proceeding up stairs, when Mrs. Trusty screamed out,

“ Let me undo your buckles. What a thoughtless man you are ! going to risk a plexy by stooping — dear me ! highty-tighty. Benjamin, show these gentlemen a room, and let them know I never wait dinner. Put the children in the breakfast-parlour—they can’t dine with the old ones. I’ve only laid for four. The curate’s a-coming from Mossbury, and is sure to be in time ; it ain’t often *he* smells turbot.”

“ Mrs. Trusty—I—that is—humph ! haugh ! eh ? I should rather wish that the little Woodwards, eh ? joined us at dinner, eh ? ” said the rector, in timid tones, as he submitted to have his buckles removed by his house-keeper.

“ Highty-tighty—gracious me ! Spoil all ? No, indeed, leave them to me, they shall not starve ; there now, go ; make haste, mind and shut the window, and call me when you want your buckles fastened. Benjamin ! here, take up some hot water, and see that your master don’t scald himself, dear, good man ! What would he do without *me* ? ”

“ And *me*,” said Benjamin, as he took up

the water, and told his master to "come along."

The rector obeyed, and intimated to me on the landing, that it was a great comfort to have all his little comforts attended to. He would have said more, but Benjamin had reached his bedroom-door, and, calling out, reminded him that Mrs. Trusty would be very much put out if her dinner was not put on to the minute. This was decisive, and we parted.

When I had performed my ablutions, I found I had a few minutes to spare, which I resolved to employ in taking a view from the window of my room, which overlooked the valley of the Clear. The moment I had opened it for the purpose, my door was opened, and Mrs. Trusty, without saying any thing, coolly closed the window again, shook the curtains, dusted the toilet-table with her apron, and cast a glance at me, as much as to say, "How dare you?"

I was about to expostulate, but the rector and my friend Woodward came into the room and led me down stairs, where I found and

was duly introduced to the curate of Mossbury.

Punctually as the clock struck six, Benjamin entered and said, "Come, sir, dinner on the table."

Though the words as they are written may imply that Benjamin was an impudent fellow, it was not the case. His manner and the tones of his voice were kind and respectful. He seemed to detest verbosity, and to be satisfied that his master understood his meaning.

The turbot was excellent. I begged a second slice; the vicar and the curate followed my example. Mr. Worthington would have done the same had not Benjamin taken away his plate, and told him "he had had enough. Mrs. Trusty had given positive orders that he should only have one help of each dish for fear of a *plexy*."

The rector sighed, winked at us — but obeyed.

The wine, too, was the best of its kind — plain port, sherry, and Madeira. We finished two bottles of port after dinner, and decided

upon trying one more out of an older bin. Benjamin was summoned, and ordered to bring it in. I thought he gave a very peculiar smile as he said,

“I’ll try, but it won’t do.”

We waited patiently for nearly half an hour ; the rector then began to grow fidgety, and winked with every word he spoke. He seemed inclined to ring the bell, but, after making two or three abortive attempts, sat down again, and gave us sundry humphs ! haughs ! and ehs ?

Suddenly the door was thrown wide open, and Benjamin entered with the tea-tray instead of the decanter of old port.

“Eh ? what ? Benjamin, I rather think I ordered more wine, eh ?” said the rector.

“Won’t stand it ; thought she wouldn’t,” said Benjamin : “tea or coffee ?”

“Take it out, I insist. I will be obeyed in my own house. Tell Mrs. Trusty she’s a disobliging female menial. Tell her . . .”

“You can tell her yourself—here she be,” said Benjamin. The rector’s courage failed

him, and he looked sheepish and winked with both eyes alternately.

“ Highty-tighty, what is the matter ? ” inquired the housekeeper, who was evidently dressed for tea, at which meal she always presided.

“ Matter ! Mrs. Trusty. I believe I have some old wine left. I merely wish my friends to taste one more bottle. I am not ready for tea. I insist—that is, I beg, I may have one more bottle, eh ? humph ! haugh ! I believe I am master here.”

“ Well, well. I only know what the doctor said. ‘ Plexy,’ said he, ‘ Mrs. Trusty, is caused by thick blood. Wine thickens blood—your master is liable to plexy—short neck and full habit. He must not indulge, except in tea, that thins the blood.’ That’s what the doctor said, so I have sent in the tea,” said Mrs. Trusty.

“ But my friends, they are not liable to apoplexy, their blood is not thick ! Hang the doctor ; I insist on another bottle, humph ! haugh ! eh ? ” said the rector, looking con-

firmatory of the doctor's assertion that he was liable to a *plexy*.

"Well, well; highty-tighty; I do all for the best; but all won't do.—I must look out—advertise—do something. After all my care! Gentlemen! *will* you have any more wine?"

We of course said "No" to this appeal; but the rector, whose courage was confirmed by the presence of his friends, insisted on having his orders obeyed, and asserted that he would be master in his own house.

Mrs. Trusty left the room, and returned with the wine, but before she placed it on the table, obtained a promise from her master that he would drink only two more glasses, as it would do him a great deal of harm.

"Quite right, quite proper. I do like a servant to be attentive to her master, eh! Mr. Scribbler? Mrs. Trusty is a very good sort of woman, but wants to be mistress. I don't allow it though, do I, Mrs. Trusty? humph! haugh! eh?" said the rector, eyeing her triumphantly, and winking at us at the same time.

Mrs. Trusty only smiled—but there was a

meaning in her smile—as she left us to enjoy our wine. The rector took his two glasses only, and when we had finished the decanter the bell was rung, and Mrs. Trusty re-entered, followed by the children, whom she had been cramming with cakes and comfits, and by Benjamin carrying the tea-tray, which had just before been banished as per order.

When we had taken our tea, the vicar proposed that we should walk home across the meadows to Clearstream, which was only about a mile and a half distant from Rushley by the footpath; though by the road it was more than three miles. Mr. Worthington objected to the plan, and offered to send us in the carriage, to prevent the ill effects of walking after a hearty meal.

“Order the carriage, Benjamin, eh?” said the rector.

“It’s of no use ordering it; Zachariah won’t let Juggenel and Brown Bury earn any more oats to-day,” said Benjamin.

“But I insist. I am master, I believe, eh? humph! haugh! I insist—eh? Mrs. Trusty.”

"Well, well; highty-tighty; you had better not; Zachariah must know best what's good for his cherubs. They can walk—you would rather walk, wouldn't you, gentlemen?" said the housekeeper.

"You are a very disobliging female domestic, ma'am, eh? I insist—I am and will be master."

"Well, well; passion thickens the blood—you'll have a plexy; but I wash my hands of it. I must look out—advertise—do something—after all my care!" said Mrs. Trusty, as she left the room to do what she knew was useless—order the carriage.

We, however, insisted on being masters of our own persons, and determined to walk home. The rector said he would walk a little way with us, and rang the bell to counter-order the carriage, and to tell his housekeeper of his intention of accompanying us part of the way.

"Not one step," said Mrs. Trusty; "have you no regard for your valuable life? Well, well, to think of your going out in the water-meadows at this time of night. Damp feet,

rheumatiz, plexy. I will not allow *that*, though I am forced to look out—advertise—do something. Benjamin, take your master's clogs away—he *can't* go out in his thin shoes."

We saw a storm brewing in the rector's mind, but before it could find vent we had taken our departure. We only heard, as we quitted the hall, "I will dismiss you all, every one; you shall all go, eh?" from the rector, and, "Easy does it—gently there—no hurry—lots of time," from Zachariah, who was surveying the Jargonelle and Brown Beurré pear-trees in front of the rectory.

CHAPTER IV.

The vicar of Clearstream was resolved that the curate of Mossbury, who went a little way out of his road for the sake of our company, should finish the evening with him and myself. As it was yet early, and I meant to smoke my one cigar, and preferred doing it in company to taking a sulky smoke in my own room, I readily consented. The curate pleaded his *solo* walk afterwards, but all his arguments were over-ruled, and we assembled in the vicarage study.

I was anxious, as the reader may imagine, to learn some particulars of the gentleman with whom we had spent the day, and to have an explanation of the circumstances which had placed him under the tyrant rule of his

domestics, which some of my friends have called "absurd," but which I can assure them is a picture of real life. I elicited the facts, which I am about to detail, in the course of our conversation.

Emilius Worthington was the only child of a highly respectable pair of parents, who, wanting something better to do, spent their lives in the *then* gay but now deserted city of Bath. The father, by way of an occupation, fancied himself an invalid. As he indulged in the pleasures of the table, and promoted the consumption of port-wine, he had now and then a bilious headache and a croup-sickness in the morning. These he construed, by the assistance of his family medical, who supplied physic and hard words, into an organic derangement of the hepatics, and a spasmodic convulsion of the diaphragm; or, as he sometimes miscalled it, *diagram*. Bath and the Bath waters — the *warm-water* cure — were recommended. Old Mr. Worthington took one glass of the water, which was very nasty, and a suite of rooms for lodgings, which were very nice — so he gave up the

water, but continued the lodgings. This plan his lady approved of, as she was very fond of a nocturnal rubber: "*PACKS nobiscum*" was her motto. Tabbies and toadies abounded in Bath; whereas at their little place in the country she could only get "four" together hebdomadally, and that by bribing the apothecary, the curate, and the village attorney with a good dinner. Worthington *père* would not play at whist, it required too much thinking, and interfered with his ports. He was all for "keeping the ports open" to a late hour, and whist was a *bar* to that, so he *barred* whist. He found many respectable old gentlemen in Bath, who being, as they said, liable to typhoid diseases, required stimulants, and kept their corkscrews in exercise; they loved to see them worming themselves into the secrets of a magnum. They were crusty old stagers — but what wonder, considering the quantity of crust they imbibed as bees-wing from the crustiness of their old port!

Master Emilius, though nearly twelve years of age when his parents took up their abode in King Bladud's city, was still an inhabitant

of the nursery, and under the especial protection of the maid, who, being of a quiet disposition and fond of sedentary pursuits, discountenanced romping, and taught her charge to string beads, net purses, and amalgamate remnants into patchwork quilts. He saw but little of his parents except at their luncheon-hour, which was his dinner-time. His father was displeased with him because he would take orange, ginger, currant, nay even parsnip wine, in preference to port, which he called "rough and *reddy*." His mother pronounced him a dunce because she could never teach him to score at whist, and when he played double-dumby with her he always led from his ace-queen suit, and could not appreciate the merits of a deep finesse. He was consequently and subsequently left to the mercies of Mary, the maid of the nursery.

How long he might have remained, like a seedling apple-tree, in the nursery, before he had been transplanted to a soil more suitable to his growth, had not "fortune favoured the brave," must of course be a mystery. His transplantation was thus effected:—

Mary, presuming on the placidity of his disposition, and the subserviency to her "whims and oddities" which he had hitherto displayed, threatened to lower his sit-down-upons and apply the rod to his epidermis for having negligently dropped two stitches in a cabbage-net. She also threatened to baste him well for basting a part of the quilt which ought to have been herring-boned. Emilius plucked up a spirit and a handful of Mary's capillaries by the roots. As soon as the pain and her amazement had a little subsided, she rushed at him to inflict the hinted-at punishment. Emilius tripped her up; and as she lay on her back kicking at him convulsively, he danced round her, his fallen foe, brandishing her uprooted locks in one hand and his netting-needle in the other, like a wild Indian over a fallen warrior of some hostile tribe.

The combined shouts and screams of the victor and the vanquished roused the father from his matutinal nap, and disturbed the mother as she was bread-crumbing a dingy pack of Hunt's best to make them look like new cards.

The bell was rung, and the footman ordered to inquire the meaning of the uproar. The fellow returned, and told the astonished parents that their son, Master Emmy, as he called him, had torn all the hair out of Mary's head, and left her as bald as she was born; that she was in "violent asterisks," because he was dancing over her, and trying to stab her to the heart with a large iron skewer.

Though this exaggeration was explained away, Mr. and Mrs. Worthington were satisfied that their son, the little master, had obtained and would maintain the mastery over Mary, who was recommended by her fellow-servants to "carry the case to the sessions, and go for heavy damages."

They therefore wisely resolved to send him to school, and dismiss Mary with a *douceur* as a plaster to her wounded honour, and to buy a bottle of

Thine incomparable oil, Macassar,

wherewith to repair the "rape of the lock."

Emilius, to show his entire forgiveness for

all past tyrannies, gave Mary a kiss, and all his netting and knitting-needles, as well as his housewife, scissars, and thimble. He even promised to write to her from Westminster-school, but in one week became such a thorough little Pickle, and so deeply engaged in the amusements of Tothill Fields and other select localities, that he forgot not only his promise, but the existence of such a being as Mary. He even forgot to write to his port-imbibing paternity — except when he required a tip, and to his card-cleaning mother, unless a cake was desirable.

In a few years Emilius was six feet two inches high, and a most accomplished “Westminster.” He could row any waterman’s apprentice to Richmond and back for a gallon of porter, give him twenty boats’ lengths, and beat him by a hundred. He could spar with Jackson, and beat the biggest bully at the Cockpit. He was one of the eleven who beat all England at Lords’, and astonished himself and all the old Westminsters by his acting of Davus in the annual play in the dormitory.

At Oxford Emilius was looked up to by every one. He excelled in athletics, but did not neglect his studies. He meant to go to the bar, and, as he did not wish to be a briefless barrister, he read hard to gain a name. He joined "the Union," as the debating society is termed, and practised forensic eloquence to the admiration of his hearers, who deemed him an embryo Cicero or a Demosthenes *in ovo*.

A circumstance, however, occurred, which caused him to alter his views in life. He spent his first long vacation in Bath, where he met with a fighting captain, who added to his half-pay by paying court to elderly ladies, who gave dinners and whist-parties. He inoculated Emilius with the military ardour by fighting his own Peninsular battles over again, and made him think disparagingly of civil occupations by his uncivil remarks on musty parchments, dry reading, law books, and the chicanery of the profession. A little ridicule, judiciously administered—a few playful remarks on the absurdity of a fine young man of six feet two hiding his nerves and

sinews under a stuff gown, and his fine flowing locks under a horse-hair wig, made him resolve to cut the law, give up all hopes of the seals, and seek the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth, or in dull country quarters.

No objections were raised to this change of profession by his parents—for his father was too much pleased with him for appreciating his old port, to care about any thing else, and his mother was delighted with him for winning her a rubber of eight by finessing the ten of trumps, when he sat with the ace and king in his hand, and was third player. They merely required that he should return to Oxford to pursue his studies until a commission could be obtained for him.

Instead of practising forensic eloquence at the Union on his return to college, Emilius spent his days in fencing and broadsword playing, at Angelo's rooms at the Checquers in the High Street, and was drilled regularly for an hour before dinner by a serjeant of the Oxford Militia. He became so military in his notions and motions, that, when he met a Proctor, he saluted him by turning his

knuckles against his forehead, instead of capping him as he ought to have done, and would not attend college-lecture because the tutor refused to let him read Cæsar's Commentaries, the Jugurthine War, and Grotius *De Bello ac Pace*.

His ambition to excel in the art of fence got him into several little scrapes. He always walked with a cane, such as his tutor, the serjeant, carried, and which is, I believe, called a ratan. This he converted into an imaginary foil or small sword, and, as he walked along, he employed it in parrying carte and tierce—prime and seconde, and lounging out, with his left-hand thrown out gracefully behind his head, at any unfortunate individual who happened to be opposed to him. Having blinded an aged female pauper by thrusting in tierce at her right eye, and seriously damaged an obese college-tutor by hitting him in carte some where about the epigastrium, he was fined for the first offence before a magistrate, as a “malignant assault,” and very nearly expelled for the latter as an act of unfilial disobedience towards his alma

mater, by pinking one of her sons and his own (university) brother.

Emilius "explained," and promised to practise in private only. This was attended by a far more serious result. The only man in the university who could at all cope with "Angelo's best pupil" was his intimate friend and companion, Tom Fernly, one of the kindest-hearted creatures that ever lived. He knew not how to say no to any proposal made by a friend; and, though he disliked fencing for three or four hours together, he could not be so cruel as not to indulge his crony, Worthington, in a pursuit that so much delighted him.

One night, after most of the men had retired to bed, Emilius and Tom Fernly resolved to exchange a few thrusts before they followed so laudable an example. The chairs and tables were pushed aside, the candles favourably disposed, and the masks, gloves, and foils properly prepared. Two or three active rallies ensued. Tom Fernly made two very palpable hits, which stimulated Emilius to greater exertions. He made a feint, and before Tom

could recover his guard, he made a thrust over his foil with all his force. The hit was made, but the slender weapon snapped in two. The force of the blow was such, that the broken weapon pierced through his clothes, and sunk deep into his left side.

Poor Tom Fernly fell, and uttered a shriek of pain, which haunted his friend for years afterwards.

Emilius drew out the foil, and the blood spouted out of the wound in scarlet jets. He stayed not to stanch it, but rushed wildly to the lodge, and sent the porter for a surgeon. He then flew rather than ran to the doors of the tutors' rooms, and begged them to hasten and save his dying friend. He knocked up the Principal of the College, and roused every man whom he knew even by name.

Tom Fernly was soon surrounded by assistants, who could do no more than hold towels and handkerchiefs to his side. These were speedily saturated with blood; and when the surgeon, a skilful and humane man, arrived, he found that he had come on an useless errand — poor Tom Fernly's life had ebbed

away. The only child of his mother, and she a widow, lay dead upon the ground, killed by one who loved him dearly.

To describe the state of mind of Emilius Worthington after this sad accident is not possible. For two years his existence was a blank. After a partial recovery, he found that his father had "closed the *ports*" and the portals of life at the same time. His widowed mother had "thrown up her hand," and with all a woman's, a mother's love, had devoted herself to watching over and tending her son. She heard of rubbers, and rumours of rubbers, but she never asked, "What was trumps?"

Diamonds she now despised. A heart—her son's heart—was the only heart she cared for. She had clubbed all her affections, and centered them in him. The only spade she thought of was the one that in the sexton's hands might cover the remains of him she held most dear when the game of life was lost to him. She finessed with the grim king, and scored against him, though the odds were greatly in his favour, as he had won several

tricks. Her partner in the rubber, Dr. —, knew a trick worth two of his, and countered him successfully.

To quit unseemly metaphor, Emilius recovered, but he was weak in body, and imbecile in mind. He took no note of aught that passed around him. He ate when meat was put before him; he drank because his mother urged him to do so. He was drawn out daily in his Bath chair to imbibe the pure breezes of Landsdown; and, as he passed through the crowded streets, wondered that the passers-by looked on him with an eye of pity.

Dr. —, knowing that, unless he was stimulated to exertion, he would wear away his life, in despite of a strong constitution, in this monotonous imbecility, recommended change of scene and air. Instead of allowing his mother to convey him to the warm and relaxing air of Devonshire, he insisted on her seeking the cool and bracing breezes of the northern coast. By easy stages they reached Scarborough, and, before they had been there many weeks, a decided improvement in the invalid was manifest. He could talk, smile—ay, even

laugh with those about him. He sought the companionship of the fishermen, and, after a while, hired a little vessel, in which he spent his days in sailing about, and fishing off the coast. Occupation blunted the edge of grief—his nerves recovered their tone. The mind and body, by sympathy, gained strength, and he began to resemble his former self.

Then did his mother kindly but judiciously suggest the prosecution of his former plan of entering the army. His commission had long been ready for him. The bare mention of this revived the image of his murdered friend, as he called him, and a relapse was the consequence—attended, as most relapses are, with increased sufferings.

His mother would not quit his side, though warned that her health was in danger. What cares a mother for her own danger when her child's life is at stake? She persevered, and paid the penalty of her perseverance. She died, and left her son to the hired care of Mrs. Trusty, then the keeper of a lodging-house at Scarborough, and her brother Benjamin, who had been promoted to the office of

body-servant to Emilius a little before his mother's death.

Emilius, under their joint care, again recovered. He returned to Bath, taking them with him—for Mrs. Trusty had no incumbrances, except her furniture and effects, which were easily disposed of with the remainder of the lease of the lodging-house. She was a widow, and childless.

When they started from Scarborough in a hired coach, driven by "Zachariah—Zachariah Bond"—Mrs. Trusty's first cousin, that lady suggested the propriety of a purchase being made of the whole turn-out, in preference to its being hired.

Emilius yielded—for he had not strength to say nay, and thus he was provided with a *family* of servants—*nolus bolus*, as Zachariah expressed it.

It is but doing justice to the trio to say, that no three servants ever displayed such zeal and attention to a master as did Mrs. Trusty, her brother Benjamin, and her cousin Zachariah. Their kindness and assiduity were not to be surpassed—as long as he was really

ill. When he grew tolerably strong, he resisted their well-meant endeavours to control him in all his actions, which in the least degree militated against his physician's orders. It was of no use—he fought manfully for independency, but they beat him. His absolute monarchy was destroyed—a republican form of government was established in his family—he was vanquished in a *servile* war.

The fight did him good. It put him on his metal, and operated more successfully than the medicines with which Mrs. Trusty had drenched him, and would have drenched him still, had not Benjamin and Zachariah called out shame. Mrs. Trusty yielded so far as to substitute broths and jellies for boluses and jalap, but she still was firm in forbidding society. She was sure he would fall a victim to visiters or visiting if she permitted it.

Dr. —, however, defeated her plans by inviting her master to dine with him, and to sleep at his house to prevent exposure to the night-air.

Emilius went. Zachariah mounted the box, and Benjamin stood on the footboard. Both

gave a silent three cheers as they waved their hats to the defeated housekeeper, for both rejoiced in the prospect of vails and perquisites, which they foresaw would follow their master's liberation. Mrs. Trusty meditated abdication, but—thought better of it.

At Dr. ——'s, Emilius first became aware of one of the results of his long and severe nervous sufferings. A small party was asked to meet him, and, though he said nothing particularly funny, he kept the "table in a roar." Every one laughed but his host, who seemed distressed at the mirth of his guests. Even the servants smiled when he spoke to them, or gave them an order. His orders, too, were unaccountably exceeded.

"Butler," said he, "a *little small* beer."

He was immediately supplied with a *large* tumbler of very *strong* ale, delivered with a smile which seemed to indicate a clever estimation of his real meaning.

"Brandy, sir?" inquired the butler.

"A very little—a *wee* drop," said Emilius.

The butler gave him a wine glass *full*.

After dinner it was the same. The guests

laughed at his most solemn stories as much, if not more, than they did at his Joseph Millers. At tea—his “*small* cup of all black—very little sugar, and no cream,” was handed to him in the shape of a breakfast-cup of strong gunpowder, over-creamed, and as sweet as syrup. His little glass of weak negus before bedtime was administered in a goblet, and was more than half wine.

When he took leave of his new friends, they laughed excessively—told him they were delighted to have met him, and hoped their acquaintance might be renewed—for they never had met so amusing a man in their lives!

Mr. Worthington was amazed. He amusing! he, a poor, nervous, shaky creature, the cause of mirth!

He went to bed. Benjamin had been drinking success to his master's release from his sister's thralldom so zealously, that he was unable to see him to bed. The housemaid goodnaturedly offered her services to prevent an exposure of Benjamin's excesses. Mr. Worthington felt awkward and nervous while

she was warming his bed, but when she had done, begged her to come and tuck him up and take his candle away.

The girl stared, laughed, gave him a poke in the ribs, and said, "She would never have believed it if she had not seen it."

Emilius looked severe, as he thought, but the girl burst out into a louder laugh, and said, "She should certainly tell her master—she was not used to such nonsense," as she left the room and banged the door after her.

Emilius got but little sleep that night, and when he met his friend, Dr. —, at breakfast, the following morning, he told him all that had occurred, and of his amazement at his being deemed so laugh-at-able a character.

Dr. — led him to a looking-glass — asked him a serious question, and bade him look in the mirror as he replied to him. Emilius did so. He saw, to his dismay, that he winked with every word he said in so ludicrous a manner, that he himself could scarcely believe that he was not joking.

He would have shut himself up for life, but Dr. — exposed the folly of such a course of action, and assured him that in time, when the habit and the cause of it were known, it would cease to be noticed. His patient believed him, and had the resolution to follow his advice.

Dr. — prevailed still further. He recommended him to engage in some professional employment. The law Emilius hated — medicine required too long a study — the army could not be even alluded to. The church was selected, and his ordination easily obtained through Dr. —'s brother, who was the Bishop of N——.

On his first appearance in the desk, Worthington felt nervous and fearful that his peculiarity should subject him to the ridicule of his congregation. He read the address in fear and trembling, but not a smile was to be seen. He went through the whole service, and heard with joy from Dr. —, who had been nervously watching the result of his experiment, that mind had conquered. A sense of the sacred nature of his office and duties

enabled him to control the action of the muscles of the eyelid.

Though Mr. Worthington needed not the revenues, he accepted the incumbency of Rushley. But why? The parish was poor, the rectory uninhabitable, the church nearly in ruins.

He repaired and restored the church at his own cost. He built a new parsonage, suitable to the living, and established a Sunday school in the village. Instead of putting money in his purse from the tithes, he spent a considerable sum in addition to what he received. The cottagers had gardens and potato grounds. The most successful cultivators were rewarded with prizes, and furnished with plants and seeds. Mrs. Trusty had a copper of soup boiling three days in the week for the aged and those with large families. Zachariah and Benjamin went round by turns with physic and wine for the sick, and caudle for the lying-in.

“In short,” said the vicar, “a better man does not live. He is now hearty and cheerful. Though he is ruled over by his housekeeper,

bullied by Benjamin, and snubbed by Zachariah, a happier man does not exist than the rector of Rushley. His servants may have their faults, but”

“He wisely *winks* at them all,” said I, as I wished him and the curate of Mossbury good night.

CHAPTER V.

A few heavy showers had fallen during the night of my visit to Rushley. I had heard the rain pattering against my window as I lay in that happy, dreamy state between sleeping and waking. I fell into a sound doze as I was speculating with myself what effect the discoloration of the water, the increased rapidity and fulness of the river Clear, would have upon my fishing. Whether the argument as to which was the better, a clear, bright water, or one slightly stained, was carried on by me in my sleep, I know not ; but, when I awoke, as I invariably do at five in the morning, it was the first thing I thought of.

"Practice," said I, "is better than theory; so here goes to try."

I sprung out of bed, threw open my case-ment window, and took a survey, first of the sky, which was obscured by light, fleecy vapours, and then of the earth, which, as far as I could judge, was still thirsting for more moisture, as the fallows looked as dry as they had done on the previous day, and the water-meadows, which had not long been mown, seemed to be parched and arid. I could just catch a glimpse of the Clear as it wound round the orchard, but could not see enough of it to judge of the state of its stream.

I dressed myself, and donned my worsteds and India-rubber boots—not your mackintosh overalls, which hang dabby and flabby about your legs — but a pair of Cording's sheet-caoutchouc solid boots, with good thick soles to them, well studded with nails, which defy all external injuries from the wet and the rough stones, which are generally found at the bottom of trout-streams, and against which, if you happen to kick with a thin

boot on, you will lame yourself, and perhaps be unable to walk for a month.

Just as I had completed my toilet, I heard a voice seemingly under my window, chanting the well-known fair song, "Dumble-down-deary," and then hissing very furiously, as if condemning its own execution of the humble ditty. I looked out, and saw my man, Boots, rubbing away at "the pheayton" as if he was grooming a nag.

"Hilloh! Boots!" cried I.

"Hulloh—what's up?" replied the sibillator, not knowing who spoke to him.

"I am up," said I; "how's the water this morning?"

"Pretty well, thank'e, sir; hope you's well," said Boots.

"You stupid fellow! I mean, what state is the river in?"

"Mortal cold; all swolled like; and as thick as mustard, just by the dung-mixen where we dips."

"Will it do for whipping?"

"Anan? — for what?" said Boots, looking bewildered.

"For throwing the fly? Whipping, we call it," said I.

"Whipping! What with a *rod*, eh? just as they do the boys up at charity-school. Dang'd if that ben't good, though I never heard it before!"

"Well, will it do?"

"Why—ah! ah! ah! — I'm a-thinking — ah! ah! ah! — I'm a-thinking that there's a little too much water in un. You won't be able to whip the same part of it, as a school-master does of his boys."

When Boots had delivered himself of this joke, he stuffed his water-brush into the bucket, slapped first his right thigh and then his left, spun a pirouette, and ended by holding his stomach with both hands, as if he was afraid of laughing out that valuable portion of his viscera.

I laughed too, as I always do at another's joke; it is very little trouble and no expense; it makes the joker on good terms with me and himself.

"Do you think the trout will rise?" said I.

"Not this morning, sir; they've been

a-gorging all night long. Capital morning for a worrum, or a little sarmon-roë."

"Worms and salmon-roë! Why that is as bad as poaching."

"Yees, sir, every bit; but that's what I likes," said Boots; "I can grope and tickle a few."

"And do sometimes, I suppose?"

Boots winked like the rector of Rushley.

"Are you not afraid of being seen?"

"Not a bit; for I never tries it on but o' dark nights, while I'm sitting up for the mail. I seez no harm in a poor fellow's arning an honest half-crown, and I likes the fun as well as you do 'ticing them with a nartyfishall fly."

"That," said I, as I closed the window, "is after all the real secret of poaching. We deny the common people any share in our sports on land or water. There is an innate love of sport in the breasts of most men, and what they cannot effect by fair means they will by foul. Then, beyond the *fun* of wiring a hare, trapping a pheasant, or snaring a trout, they gain a few shillings in addition to their hard-earned, scanty wages, which enables them to

have a pint of beer with their companions at the alehouse over a game of skittles or quoits ; for the ill-gotten gains are seldom carried home to their families."

This little bit of soliloquism served me until I reached the yard, where I found that mine host had joined Mr. Boots, who looked at me, and laid his index-finger beside his nose, plainly meaning "Don't you betray me."

I felt a little mischievously inclined, and put so many questions to the landlord touching snaring, wiring, groping, and cocculus-indicus-ing trout, that poor Boots could only hide his agony by rubbing harder and hissing louder as he polished off "the pheayton."

When I had teased him sufficiently, I dropped the subject of poaching, and asked mine host's opinion of the chance of succeeding with a fly.

"Not a chance of a rise," said he. "Though the morning is cloudy, there is not a breath of air stirring ; the water is a little tinged by the rain, and all the insects were either beaten down by the showers which fell in the night, or have sought shelter among the boughs and sedges ; the fish have been feeding all night.

If you will take some well-scoured, bright brandlings, and go up the brook where it is too narrow, and too much overhung with bushes to throw a fly, you may take three or four brace of heavy fish. Put on a strong, short line, fish the deep holes under the banks, and keep out of sight ; you will be sure to have some sport. I do not allow every one to worm-fish, but I am sure *you* will put back every trout under twelve inches — you angle fairly.”

I accepted the advice and the compliment. I selected my brandlings, put my tackle together, and started. As soon as I came to a dark, gloomy-looking corner, where the brook, by making a sudden turn, had undermined the bank and dug for itself a deep hole, I dropped in my worm. Tug ! my wrist was nearly wrenched off ! The shock was so sharp and so unexpected, that I forgot to strike, and the fish escaped. I put on a fresh brandling, and tried again. Tug again ! I gave such a pull, that I must have almost jerked the trout's head off. However, I had him. After a few short, sharp plunges, I pulled him out bodily,

and landed him by main force, as I could trust to my twisted-gut tackle. He was a splendid fellow, in weight about three pounds. I *creeled* him, and tried again, but without success.

"That fellow," said I, "has monopolized the best feeding-place in the brook, and bullied all the other fish away. He is an old bachelor, and will not admit even a female near him."

Trout are very like pigs in their habits and customs. I have stood watching them many times as I have thrown in worms to them. The biggest fish—the old boar—will hunt all the others away with his snout, until he has satisfied his hunger. Then he will beat them about for a time, until he is tired, just to gratify a nasty temper. When he retires to his hold—his sty—a general rush takes place; but the next biggest fish assumes the bully in his turn, and generally succeeds in driving off the smaller fry.

Then how they will fight! The keeper of a very kind and dear friend of mine—"the squire"—was one day engaged with one of his assistants in cutting the weeds in a lake which

is fed by a brook, and tolerably well stored with trout. They heard a great splashing at a little distance, and rowed the punt to the spot. They saw two trout, of about two pounds weight each, fighting as viciously as a pair of rams, and much after the same fashion. The fish retreated from each other for three or four feet, and then rushed forward, butting with their heads, and trying to bite each other. So fierce was the contest, that they took not the slightest notice of the punt or the men, although they were close over them, but continued the fray for half an hour, until they were both so exhausted, that they lay like logs just beneath the surface of the water, but panting with the exertions they had been making. The keeper touched them with the pole, but they were too much exhausted to move, and rolled over on their sides as if they were lifeless.

Well, I tried several other deeps with success, and was about to retire, when I saw a place that looked so much like the home of another old bachelor-trout, that I could not refrain from trying it. I inserted the brand-

ling, and, in a few seconds, when it was near the bottom, I felt a very gentle tug.

"A nibble," said I, as I gently raised my hand.

Tug, tug, tug! Away went my line down the stream, and the rod was nearly pulled from my hand. I struck hard, and pulled with all my might with both hands; still the tug, tug, tugging continued, but I could not move the fish.

"Gently there—easy does it—no hurry—lots of time," said I, quoting "Zachariah—Zachariah Bond! what the deuce can this be that I have got hold of?"

I kept a tight line all the while, and every now and then felt a desperate tug, and a violent wriggle and twist. The truth flashed across me.

"I have hooked an eel, and the sly fellow has taken a round turn or two with his tail on the roots of yon willow; but I am up to sniggling, and I will have him out," said I.

Nothing like patience and perseverance to conquer all eels and all difficulties. After a quarter of an hour's steady pulling, my friend

relaxed his hold, and I jerked him on the bank, put my foot on his head, and, whilst he amused himself with twisting his tail round my leg, and pinching my boot, I cut the hook off and bagged the fine monster, which weighed nearly five pounds.

But I really beg pardon of my lady readers, and of all others who are not fond of the gentle art. I can only say, as little King Jamie said when he was riding a pickback, "Ech! sirs, dinna ye see that I am carried awa wi' my *subject*?"

I had strayed further from Clearstream than I had intended, and hardly knew where I was, or which was the road to the vicar's, where I had promised to eat my breakfast. I looked round for an informant, and saw a man tending his sheep at a little distance, and just beyond him a clump of fine old elm-trees, from the midst of which a little white tower was visible, and by its side the chimneys of a dwelling-house. I strode through the brook, and inquired the name of the village to which the church belonged. I found that it was called Mossbury, and that the house — the

chimneys of which I had seen—was the residence of the curate whom I had met the day before.

“He shall have two brace of my best trout,” said I; “any of them but the old bachelor; my kind friend the professor shall have him and the eel, for he dearly loveth the good things of this life. How he will enjoy a spitchcock !”

I walked up to the parsonage and found the curate, Mr. Flexible, working in his garden. His coat and waistcoat were thrown off, and he was busily employed with two of his sons in earthing up his early potatoes, which seemed the principal crop of his garden. Four or five girls were busy working with their needles in a porch which, covered with roses, jessamines and clematis, protected the entrance to the house.

I opened my errand and my creel at the same time. The fish were much admired, and freely accepted. My fine bachelor trout was handed from one to the other of the children who had congregated around us. I began to think that the professor had lost his chance ;

but, having been admired, the monster was safely returned to my creel, and carefully covered with some fragrant herbs. The eel, which was still alive, was an object of terror to the little ones, who could not be persuaded that it was not an overgrown snake.

Mr. Flexible invited me to breakfast with him. It was on the table, the tea made, and only waiting to be poured out. I was forced to decline, as the vicar of Clearstream was expecting me. I, however, readily promised to walk over to lunch, and bring the vicar and his children with me; at which all the little Flexibles showed their joy by dancing about and clapping their hands.

One of the boys was despatched with me to show me the nearest way to Clearstream, which was only one mile distant, though I had walked nearly four miles, by following the meanderings of the tortuous brook.

After many involuntary noes, the little fellow who had been my guide consented to go with me to the vicar's, but made me promise to take all the blame of his truancy on myself.

Mr. Woodward was delighted to see me ; and his children praised me for bringing their playfellow with me. After breakfast we all started together for Mossbury, excepting Emily, as Miss Woodward was called, who was forced to remain behind to prepare the dinner, at which Mr. Worthington and Mr. Flexible were to join us as per agreement made on the previous evening.

“Our friend Flexible,” said the vicar, as he walked along, following the children, who were scampering about before us like a parcel of little dogs, making the one mile five by their deviations from the straight track, “is a man greatly to be pitied, and greatly to be admired. His history is a curious one, and I have no doubt I can prevail upon him to give you an outline of it. He is an example of the folly of those parents and schoolmasters who do not teach their children and their pupils that twelve pence make one shilling, and that, if you spend eighteen pence out of it, you will not have much left of its next door neighbour.”

“He is poor then?” said I.

“As poor as a church mouse, the reading of which I take to be a Church of England curate. He is, however, an incumbent, but not of the parish in which he dwells. But I must not, as novel-readers say, hint at the *dénouement* lest the tale he has to tell lose its interest. Here we are, and there is the good soul and his eldest girl preparing our little feast in the porch.”

We found a neat luncheon of bread and cheese, cold gammon of bacon, nice crisp lettuces, and bright red radishes, flanked by pats of butter garnished with emerald green parsley, and jugs of foaming ale, set out on a cloth which, in purity, might have competed with fresh fallen snow. There were curds and whey, apples well preserved, and nice fresh strawberries for the children, with creams and cheesecakes, and hot apple-tarts, which had evidently been manufactured during my three or four hours' absence.

All looked so nice and so clean and tempting, that although I had done great justice, or injustice — for I had robbed it fearfully — to the vicar's meal, I felt a returning appe-

tite, and sat down with a determination to risk the spoiling of my dinner by making a hearty lunch.

Every thing was good—super-good—and I enjoyed it; but my enjoyment was increased by seeing the zeal of the children in the game of “cramming made easy.” How they did worry the cheesecakes and shake the curds and whey! How they did crunch the apples and crush the strawberries, smiling all the while, but not uttering one word! Their orders were given in masonic signs, which their entertainers readily understood and obeyed.

When they “could no more,” or, as Homer says, when the desire of eating and drinking was expelled—fairly beaten out of the field—away they started, coursing each other up and down the paths, over the hedges and gates, as rapidly and as carelessly as if such a word as indigestion was not to be found in the dictionary. What cared they whether the chyle was converted into chyme, and whether the liver furnished a due supply of bile to send the mass of fluids and solids which they had

consumed safely on its journey through the alimentary duct? Not one little brazen half-farthing, which used to be called a mite.

We three elderly gentlemen sat gazing at them, and I thought we all three seemed to wish that the hours which "die and are found fault with," the hours of our childhood, would return again—again to perish—again to be complained of.

"Bah! Mr. Scribbler," says some impatient reader, "you are off again. What has all this to do with the curate's autobiography?"

Much, courteous reader—or lovely reader, if you be a "female woman." The very gambols of those children, who scampered off to an adjoining field to uncock and toss about farmer Read's hay, which was fit and ready to be carried, enabled my friend the vicar to request the curate of Mossbury to enter on the details of his past life, without their seeming to be "*à propos* to nothing."

CHAPTER VI.

“Story? God bless you, I have none to tell, sir.”

Thus sung Mr. Canning; and thus said—though not in the same words—the curate of Mossbury. Where the former had rhyme, the latter had, as he thought, reason for the assertion. He did not deem a recital of the pains and penalties which attended his trial of life worth our hearing; but being pressed to communicate them—*sic orsus est*.

I believe, because I was told so, that I was born in London, at a potato-shop somewhere about Tottenham Court Road, in the parish of St. Pancras. My memory, however, carries me no further back than to the time when my parents dwelt in Thornhaugh Street. This I recollect well. We had a lady who lodged

with us. She was an artist, and eked out a small income by painting oil-coloured pictures for sale. She took a great fancy to me. Most spinsters do love little boys with flaxen hair and blue eyes; and mine were of that hue. She induced me, with cakes and comfits, to sit for my picture; and, considering that I did not sit still for two minutes consecutively, I believe she made a very extraordinary likeness of me.

It did not please me, however; my cheeks were not sufficiently cherry-coloured to my mind; and, whilst she left the room for a few minutes, I not only obliterated all traces of my second self—*mei alterius*—but smudged and spoiled every picture within my reach. Her rage was so great, that she knocked me down with a long stick, with a lump of leather at the end of it, and was ignominiously expelled from her lodgings, for her brutality, by my indignant parents.

My next recollection of a home is in a neat little cottage, a few miles from town, on the great north road. This I remember well, because I was of age to pelt frogs, and I had a

fine and well-stocked preserve of them in a broad deep ditch at the back of the house. I did nothing but pelt frogs and eat unripe fruit from morn till night.

There was one old fellow, a great, overgrown, yellow grandpapa, whom I never could manage to hit with a pebble. He saw what I was at; and, just as the stone flew from my hand, he dived and came up again uninjured a few feet further up or down the ditch. As I could not settle him with a pebble, I resolved to try a paving-stone. We had one loose in the brewhouse hard by. I extracted it, and managed to carry it to the edge of the ditch and raise it above my head. I took a deliberate aim at my enemy, hurled the stone with all my might, and drowned him and myself—for I was actually drowned. I felt a short, unpleasant kind of chokiness, made a few vigorous kicks, then saw some delicious green fields and flowery meadows, and felt nothing more. Animation was suspended.

Our servant, however, heard the splash, saw my heels in the air, and extracted me. I believe I was rolled over a barrel, to let the

water run out of my stomach, and then put into a tub of warm soap-suds which stood convenient, as it happened to be washing-day.

At any rate, I was restored to life; and, instead of being well flogged for cruelty and mischief, I was fondled, dandled, and stuffed with cake and wine. The cure was so pleasant, I had a great mind to suspend my animation once more; but I did not like the *pins* and *needles* sensations which followed when the blood began to find a passage through my veins.

I ought to have told you that I was an only child—my mother a mere girl, and married to a man some years older than herself. Of course, I was spoiled. I had my own way in every thing; and a very pleasant way I thought it was.

My father's duties in a public office kept him in town all day. My mother, to keep me out of mischief and in a good humour, neglected her household cares to play with me; for I could not agree with any playfellow of my own age, but generally sent him home with the dig of a spade strongly marked on

his scalp, or the mark of the teeth of a garden-rake on his face. I was a boxer by instinct, and had great taste in manufacturing black eyes and sanguineous noses.

When my father returned from office, his blue bag always contained, in addition to his office-papers, a supply of fruit and cakes, and some new toy, which seldom preserved its entirety until the following morning. As to money, I was overloaded with it; for, besides the contributions levied from my parents, every guest—and their name was Legion—that came down to dine at the cottage, by the stage, on Sunday, converted the feed into a shilling ordinary, and paid me the price of his dinner.

As I received freely, I gave freely, and obtained the character of a very charitable child, because I gave many a beggar a shilling—of which I knew not the value—where others would have grudged a halfpenny; I thought it great fun to see their surprise at receiving silver, where they hardly expected to get copper.

When I was eight years old, I was the terror

of the neighbourhood. In addition to my other mischievous pranks, I had acquired a taste for chemistry—that branch of it at least which treats of combustibles. I had always a supply of oxymuriate of potash, sulphur, nitre, and charcoal on hand, with which I made the most frightful noises, and caused the most horrible stench.

I learnt the properties of a judicious mixture of brimstone and iron-filings, and mixed a bucketful with pump-water, which I buried in the earth near to our pigsty. The consequence was, an imitation earthquake, which destroyed the building, and immolated the pigs in the ruins. The neighbourhood was alarmed, and complained to my father. He, however, defended me. He applauded my “pursuit of science under difficulties,” and prophesied that I should be a second Humphrey Davy.

Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately for me, I extended my experiments to hydraulics. I investigated the properties and powers of a squirt or syringe. I was delighted, and procured a magnificent specimen of one in brass,

which held a pint of fluid, and was intended for the injecture of the veins of some interesting human subject.

I was tired of squirting at insects in trees, and drowning butterflies and bees. I made up my mind to have a shot at a man or a woman—I did not care which. Our garden-pales ran parallel with the high-road. I managed by knocking out a knot in the wood to find a lodgment for the snout of my syringe, which was loaded with dirty ditch-water. I heard a step approaching—caught a glimpse of a well-dressed man, and let fly.

I felt I had succeeded, for I heard a hearty and strongly-developed oath. In a few seconds the face and neckcloth of a gentleman appeared above the paling. I was then *sure* I had been successful, for both were covered with duckweed and green slime. He wielded a bamboo at me, and threatened to break every bone in my skin—which I have no doubt he would have done, for he ran round by the gate, and searched every where for me—had I not crept into the cucumber-frame, and pulled the glass over me.

My poor mother apologized most humbly, and the gentleman forgave me out of pity to her tears, and went home to re-dress for dinner, without having had his wrongs re-dressed.

My father was very angry, for I had destroyed his cucumber-plants by lying on them for three hours. He threatened to send me to school, and put his threat into execution. I was placed at "a preparatory seminary for young gentlemen" in the neighbourhood; and, as my parents came to see me every day, and never left me without a tip, which I gave away immediately, I became very popular, and was soon chosen captain of the gang of mischief-makers — a post I filled with great credit, as I had strong inventive faculties, and, as Mr. Hood says, "did not care for cut behind."

I ruined the reputation of two English ushers, and drove the French teacher mad. The drawing-master, who was afterwards killed, poor fellow, by falling from a parachute of his own invention, was the only one on the establishment who served me as I deserved. He beat me black and blue for

greasing his drawing-paper, and mixing brown sugar with his pigments.

My father indicted him for the assault; but, as I confessed my misdeeds, and owned that I deserved the punishment I had received, he was acquitted, and highly applauded for his judicious conduct. I was expelled from this, my first school, for tartar-emeticising the establishment at breakfast one Sunday morning just before they were going to church. My knowledge of chemicals fortunately enabled me to administer the exact dose, or I might have been hanged for poisoning the whole school.

I stayed at home for nearly two years, and had daily lessons from the curate of the parish. I liked him much, and worked hard between mischief times. We parted at last, for I could not resist sticking a darning-needle into his pantaloons — he wore them so very tight.

My father threatened to send me to a public-school, and gave me such a glowing description of the fagging system, that, rather than submit to such tyranny, I ran away from

home, and resolved to go to sea. I had plenty of silver money about me, so I went to the play that night, but forgot to ensure a bed. I had to pass the night in one of the sheds in Covent Garden Market. In the morning I went to Billingsgate, and got on board a Gravesend sailing-packet. When I arrived, I went to the Ship Inn, where I met with a seaman, to whom I explained my wish to enter the service. He promised to get me a berth; and, after he had drunk two bottles of wine at my expense, left me, as I thought, to speak to the captain of some vessel in my behalf.

In about half an hour he returned with a police-officer, who was seeking for a lad of my description, and for whose recovery a reward of £100 had been offered by his anxious parents.

I refused to give an account of myself. They took from me all my money, put me into a coach, and carried me before the advertising parties, where I was speedily disowned. Disappointed of his expected reward, the policeman dismissed me with a hearty drubbing,

but forgot to return me my money. As I could not starve, I walked quietly home, and relieved my parents from their misery by appearing before them, and trumping up some most ridiculous story about having been robbed, and left for dead in a lane hard by.

Instead of being punished, I was caressed, kissed, hugged, and cried over. My money was restored with interest, and I was an idle boy at home — that is, unemployed in every thing but mischief.

Fortunately, my father's principal took a fancy to me, and got me an appointment on the foundation of —— School. I stayed there seven years, though I was generally flogged three days a week — for mischief, not for my lessons, for, as comedians say, I had a "quick study."

As I had an unlimited supply of money, and threw it away as dross, I was a great favourite. I was money-lender general, but kept no account of my loans, and never dreamed of asking for payment. I was on the point of leaving for college with a good exhibition, when the boys deemed it right to

resist a pecuniary imposition of the headmaster, and have a grand rebellion. I was, of course, selected to lead it, or head it. I did so successfully, and was expelled. In this case I was unjustly punished. The trustees of the school reproved the master, and would have restored me to my rights and privileges. I indignantly refused, and was backed by my father, who, having been promoted in his office, and, having had his salary doubled, resolved to send me to college at his own expense.

I found no difficulty in obtaining an entrance to the university, as my schoolmaster, feeling that he had acted unjustly to me, gave me flattering testimonials, and explained the circumstances which led to my removal from school in a manner that placed my conduct in a favourable light.

How I did enjoy my three years at Oxford! I had unbounded credit, and an unlimited supply of ready money, which was all spent on pleasure, for I never thought of paying a bill, because I was never asked to do so. I had read quite enough at school to enable me

to attend college lectures without reading up for them. I passed my little-go easily, was always complimented at collections, and as I had exchanged mischief for field sports, I seldom got into any serious scrapes. Knocker-wrenching and sign-removing were in vogue in my day, but I saw no fun in it, so I never engaged in it. Any fool could carry off a bit of iron or a barber's pole.

My delight was in rowing, fishing, hunting, and shooting. I was as good at the trap as in the field — with the rifle as with the fowling-piece. I rode a good horse, kept a stylish buggy; and, as I gave very correct feeds — spreads we used to call them — I easily found access to the best noisy sets.

My vacations were spent, not at home in the humble cottage of my parents, but in the houses of my college friends, where I had plenty of invitations to fish, shoot, and hunt.

All this was exceedingly agreeable, and I thought it was to last for ever. I was disagreeably undeceived. The time came for me to go up for my examination for my degree. I engaged a private tutor to cram me with

logic and divinity. I went up, passed very respectably, and put on my Bachelor of Arts gown. I gave an elegant dinner to my friends at the Star, and we had a very jolly night indeed.

I awoke the next morning, and found myself in my own lodgings and in my own bed. How I contrived to get there I do not remember. I rose with a frightful headache, a parched mouth, and a feverish pulse. Every nerve in my body was unstrung, and I trembled like the leaf of the aspen. I sponged my bursting temples with spring-water, drank some soda and brandy, and left my sleeping-room with the intention of trying to eat some breakfast.

I shall never forget the sight that awaited me in my sitting-room. The breakfast-table was literally covered with letters and notes of all shapes and sizes. Most of them were wafered, and wore that peculiar look of oblongity which, I have since ascertained, bills invariably wear.

I wondered who my numerous correspondents were, as I had never received so many letters in my life. My wonder was soon ex-

changed for alarm as I opened the epistles as rapidly as I could, and glanced at their contents.

I had not time or inclination to examine the items: I merely looked at the sums total. The amount surprised as well as frightened me. I did not believe it possible that I could have run so deeply in debt. My sufferings in that one hour, while I was glancing at the result of my folly and thoughtlessness, more than compensated for all the pleasures I enjoyed while I was contracting the debts. I fancied I should go mad. I think I should have done some rash act on the spur of the moment, had not some of my companions come in, and, seeing the open bills, guessed at the cause of my haggard and gloomy looks, and ridiculed me out of my fears of immediate arrest and subsequent ruin. They assured me that my creditors could afford to wait my pleasure, and I pretended to believe them.

I spent the day following my debauch in the way that such days are usually spent—in “ditto repeated.” I endeavoured to drown

care in wine, and to insure sleep by risking apoplexy or delirium tremens. Care would not be drowned, like "maudlin Clarence," in wine. Sleep would not come to relieve my oppressed and overcharged brain. I closed my eyes, but visions of angry and pressing tradesmen were distinctly visible: the face of an exasperated father, a pitying but mourning mother, haunted me. I could not endure the torture, and sought relief in a copious draught of brandy. It succeeded: thought was annihilated.

When I recovered my senses, I was amazed to see my father and mother sitting by my side, and a table covered with labelled bottles and pill-boxes standing at the bed-foot. I put my hand to my head, and endeavoured to collect my wandering thoughts.

I found that my hair had been shaved closely off, and that some cold application was lying over my forehead and temples. I essayed to speak, I could not. I tried to move, but was too weak. My mother saw my eyes open and gazing at her. She leaned forward and spoke to me. I could not reply to

her, but my looks told her that she was understood. She fell on her knees and sobbed as though her heart would burst, while she evidently offered up her thanks for the recovery of my worthless self. My father, too, shed tears as he grasped my hand ere he raised my mother from the floor, and removed her into the outer room.

I had had an attack of brain-fever, and had raved like a maniac; disclosing in my ravings the cause of the disease under which I laboured.

As soon as I was sufficiently recovered to render it safe to do so, my father, in a kind and gentle manner, hinted at the subject of my debts.

I owned that I had been imprudent and improvident, but I did not *dare* to tell him the extent to which I was involved. I named a sum amounting to scarcely one-third of my liabilities, and that sum greatly surprised and alarmed him. I could read his wonder and terror in his face. I was astonished at this, for, though the sum I had named was a considerable one, I believed him to be rich enough to disburse it without inconvenience.

He had a large salary, his expenses were moderate, and his self-indulgences but few. I did not, however, dwell upon the subject, as he promised me that I should have the money as soon as he could sell out, and remit it to me.

He did not upbraid me; but, ere he left me for the resumption of his official duties, put a fifty-pound note into my hands, and begged me to pay for what I henceforth might want. My mother went with him, and I was left alone—a prey to horrible misgivings, and conscience-stricken for having deceived so good, so kind a parent.

Under the plea of illness, I declined seeing any of my former companions. I sold my horses and buggy, put my guns up for a raffle, and disposed of boats, tandem-whips, fishing-tackle, and every thing in which I had before delighted. They brought me about one-sixth of their original cost.

When the remittance arrived, I paid off all my little bills in full. The heavier ones I paid in part, which was received with that politeness and civility which is ever shown to

their debtors by respectable University tradesmen, who see through and grieve at, though they cannot alter, the horrible system of credit-giving, which involves all parties in distress and difficulties.

I made arrangements to pay the remainder by instalments. This was readily agreed to, and I might have contracted fresh debts had I been so inclined. The severe lesson I had received was too fresh in my memory to allow me to do so foolish a thing.

I kept my master's term, and left the University, though I did not remove my name from the books of my college. The authorities parted with me reluctantly, as they said—congratulated me on having obtained my degree, and expressed themselves satisfied with the *creditable* manner in which I had run my college career; alas! they had not the remotest idea of the *credit* I had obtained.

Well, my education was finished, as the phrase goes. I was a fair classical scholar, knew a little of Aldrich's logic, and a smattering of theology; but I could not do an addition sum; arithmetic was not looked upon

as necessary at —— school; and at Oxford you were supposed to have acquired it before you were matriculated. My father was a good accountant. I mentioned my ignorance of figures to him, and he instructed me in the rudiments. Still I knew not the value of money. The gross annual amount of the small sums I squandered away daily did not occur to me.

I spent a great deal in pocket-money, but *how* I could not tell. I had not the remotest idea of the real worth of any article. Whatever was demanded I paid. My London tailor charged seven guineas for a coat, and I concluded that all coats were worth seven guineas each. My bootmaker charged £2 12s. for Wellingtons, and I had no doubt all other bootmakers charged the same.

The time had arrived when I was to choose a profession, for trade with my education was out of the question. Law, physic, divinity, were before me; I was to make my choice; how was I to decide?

My father's office was connected with the legal profession, and a solicitor, a partner in

one of the largest and most respectable firms in London, who had received a favour at his hands by which he had been enabled to bring to a speedy conclusion an important cause, which might otherwise have run on for many years, offered to give me my articles, and to pay the stamp-duties.

I was an ass for not accepting his offer ; but I hated the law. A parchment-deed was as fearful an instrument to me as a death-warrant. A State of Facts I believed to be all lies, and an Affidavit I looked upon as a written perjury.

As to physic, I was too old to learn compounding draughts and manufacturing pills ; besides, I thought an apothecary's trade as *infra dig.* The old adage of a physician's beginning to earn his bread, when he had no sound teeth left wherewith to devour it, choked me off the gold-headed cane. Surgery I looked upon as cutting and maiming legalized.

There was only divinity left, and, I candidly own, though it had its temptations, I thought I was not fitted for a parson. It is

true I could hunt, fish, and shoot, and was qualified to dine with the squire on Sunday after service; but these accomplishments, invaluable as they are, did not comprehend, in my opinion, all the duties of parsonity.

The army and navy were out of the question. I was too old for a youngster, and had no relation who was a commander-in-chief or a lord of the Admiralty. I did not fancy country-quarters, and had a notion that a cockpit was a loathsome cockroachy hole.

Unable to make up my mind what profession to adopt, I did nothing except frequent the theatres. I became melodramatically mad, and entertained serious thoughts of entering myself for the tragic plate. I should perhaps have done so, but I was told it was necessary to put myself in training in the provinces before I started in the London course, which, of course, I did not relish.

Aut Cæsar aut nullus,

either a Garrick *per saltum*, or nothing at all, was my motto.

Though I could not play on the stage, I

could write for it:—I did. My farce was accepted, underlined, played, and damned most decidedly. There was no mistake about it; the yells and hisses which ascended as the curtain descended are fresh in my ears now.

I tried my hand at two or three magazine articles, and succeeded. My friends said they were very clever: the reviewers took no notice of them whatever, and I was disgusted.

Thus I went on, “a man about town,” drawing largely on my father’s means, and eating the bread of idleness, until the serious illness of my mother, which terminated in her death, recalled me to my senses.

During the six months which I had spent by her bedside, I had time to examine myself, and I became an altered man. A change had come over the spirit of my waking thoughts, and I resolved to enter the church as soon as I had qualified myself for it.

My mother left me £500, with which I paid off another portion of my Oxford debts. This was a great relief to me, though a serious sum still remained to be liquidated, and I did

not dare ask my father for the means of paying it, as I must have owned the imposition I had practised upon him previously. However, I had time before me, and trusted that something would turn up, though what the "turn-up" would be I knew no more than a card-player, who has just had the pack cut to him.

I went down to a village on the borders of Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire, and resided in the house of the clergyman of the parish. There I read very hard to qualify myself for ordination, and attended my friend and tutor in his visitings, that I might learn the duties of a parish priest.

I obtained a curacy as a title for orders in a small agricultural parish in Oxfordshire, where the rector was resident, but too great an invalid to do any part of the duties.

I passed a good examination, and was ordained. I can safely say that no man ever entered the church from purer motives, or with a more awful sense of the nature of his responsibilities than I did. My whole ener-

gies were devoted to the due discharge of my duties.

My curacy was not a very valuable one ; my stipend was £60 per annum ; but out of it I had to pay £30 for the rent of a pretty little cottage.

Celibacy in the clergy I deemed criminal—I resolved to marry. I selected one of my cousins, an exceedingly pretty girl, without one shilling in the world, or the hopes of one—paid my addresses to her, and was accepted. My kind father shook his head ; but, instead of calling me a fool, as I was, agreed to allow me £200 per annum, which I and my wife—who was as ignorant of the value of money as I was—thought a very large income.

Many of the clergy contrive to live respectably and respected on much less. So might I have done, but I thought my wife ought to have a lady's maid, and I fancied I could not do without a man servant. Then we were five miles from a market-town, and I thought we ought to keep a horse and gig to go shopping and calling. I bought a complete turn-out for £80, and very cheap it was ; but my foot-

man, though he could brush a coat, could not curry a horse, so I was forced to engage a groom, who would have worked in the garden as well as looked after the horse if he had known how, which he did not until I hired a gardener to teach him.

Before the completion of twelve months I was a father, and, when the monthly nurse abdicated, I was obliged to add a competent nursemaid to my establishment, and to furnish a room as a nursery, which required an innumerable series of articles whose names were new to me — cribs, cots, cradles, and caudle-cups among the rest.

Of course it was necessary to give a christening party ; and, as I was justly famed for my little dinners in the neighbourhood, I could not do less than show the world that I was competent to do the thing as it should be done on a larger scale. I was successful, and astonished my friends with the purity of my taste in solids and my *recherché* selection of fluids. I did give them a capital dinner and magnificent wines, that they must allow.

My rector thought my father a man of for-

tune, or he probably would have expostulated with me on the folly and wickedness of my extravagance; as it was, he commended my spirit, ate of my dinners, invalid as he was, and told me I did great credit to the parish.

By the poor I was much liked, because I gave away to all that asked me; and, though I was often imposed upon by fictitious tales of distress and knew it, I never refused my aid, because I believed I was erring on the right side.

Just as the two years for which I had engaged myself as curate had expired, I got appointed, through the interest of my well-fed friends, to an hospital in the neighbourhood. I was called the hospital-chaplain, and had to read prayers to six old men and the same number of women daily, and to take charge of the education of six poor boys if they chose to come to school, which they never did. The salary was only £100 per annum; but then I had a magnificent house, with coals and candles furnished me, and free from taxes. It had been used by my predecessor as a private school-house. I took to his furniture and

pupils, and found myself master of eighteen very respectable boys, who paid me £100 per annum each and a few little *et ceteras*.

Before I had been settled in my new home above a week, my father came down to see me and congratulate me on my good fortune on being "settled for life." He had been ailing for some time, but I was not aware of it.

On the third morning of his visit he was found dead in his bed. I was deeply grieved at my loss, for he had been ever over-kind, over-indulgent to me. After his funeral, I went up to London to inquire about his property: to my great surprise, he left me but £600, and his furniture and cottage, worth about £800 more. He told his lawyer that he had supplied me so freely during his lifetime, that it was impossible to lay by a larger sum.

With this money I paid off the debts contracted at my curacy, which were much more serious in amount than I had conceived them to be, and a further instalment of my Oxford ticks. I had no fear of the remainder being

troublesome or difficult to discharge, as my income was now full £2000 per annum. I did pay them all off in two years, but then I was running up fresh bills with my tradesmen.

Well—I must not be tedious, nor dwell too long on this part of my history—I own that I was very *fast* — the new term for extravagant—I exchanged my gig and one horse for a close carriage and pair, kept a saddle-horse and a larger collection of servants, for my family increased very alarmingly. In summing up her family matters, my wife “set down nought and *carried one*” every year. She put down nothing to the amount of our expenditure, but bore me a child to show her breeding.

Then, of course, I gave good dinners, and lots of the very best wine. I was a convivial man, and as others visited me I could do no less than return their visits. I was “booked full” for every day in the week; and as I could not devote my evenings to my pupils and my friends too, I did the latter personally, and the former by proxy. I shot, too, and hunted, because I pretended that my health

required it. I spent my vacations from home, to vary the monotony of my wife's life ; but Brighton in the summer, and London in the winter, were not to be visited for nothing. Still it was all very pleasant. At the end of seven years I found that my pupils were reduced to six instead of eighteen. I prudentially dismissed one of my assistants, and thought all would go on well.

I was roused from my dream of fancied security by my grocer, who politely drew my attention to his ledger. I was astonished at the sum total on the "debtor's side" — it amounted to one year's income. I paid him by two bills — one at three, and the other at six months. He was satisfied, and told the bookseller, the butcher, and baker, what an honourable man I was ; they became alarmed, and the scene on my breakfast-table at Oxford was repeated.

I examined the bills, and found myself involved beyond all hope of extrication. I had moral courage enough to call my creditors together, and to enter into an arrangement for the gradual liquidation of their claims. They

consented, and I made over every thing to a friend, who sold my coach and horses, my wines, and superfluous furniture, reduced my establishment to a cook, housemaid, and knife-and-shoe-boy, turned my assistants out of doors, and gave me some sound advice, on which I resolutely acted.

My friends rallied round me, and assured me the report of my distresses would only be a nine days' wonder. The fire of detraction would go out of itself, or be extinguished by the first torrent of abuse that could be directed against some other poor unfortunate. They obtained me several new pupils, and I worked hard and manfully, got up early and sat up late; still I could not master my arithmetic, and falsely conceived that fifty pence was eight-and-fourpence; and that if I gave away half-a-crown, I was only fifteenpence out of pocket; so that my children were never without plenty of pocket-money.

I was really going on very well, and I rather think saving money, when I was seized with a severe illness, the result of over-application and want of exercise. I had not

long taken to my bed when my wife was seized, too, with a violent rheumatic fever, for which the doctor bled her to such an excess that he brought on an attack of dropsy. There we lay, side by side, unable to help each other. The boys I was obliged to send home; and, as I could not receive them at the beginning of the following half-year, they were sent — unwillingly I believe — to other schools.

My children would not be kept away from us; so their governess, who feared that she should lose her salary, made that an excuse for leaving us.

The servants, having the same dread of the loss of their wages, went away without giving warning, all but our poor old cook, who really pitied us.

I could not do my chapel duties, and, after wearing out every volunteer parson in the neighbourhood, was forced to hire a substitute. As soon as I could crawl down stairs, I took my seat in the school-room, and hoped to see a pupil or two enter, in consequence of an advertisement I had inserted

in the paper. Not one came. My friends, however, visited me, and all with demure and cold faces blamed me exceedingly for being so imprudent as to be ill and lose my pupils; and my wife still more, for not being able to attend to her own children, and comb out the boarders' hair.

The tradesmen, too, were very attentive in calling on me, and suggested advertising for boys at half-price as the only chance of getting a livelihood. Some of them hinted at the propriety of selling off my books and vacant desks as no longer of any use, and applying the proceeds to the use of themselves.

I confess I was disgusted. When I got into difficulties by my thoughtlessness and ignorance of the value of money, I was only laughed at and bid to hope for the best; now that illness had reduced me to want, I was blamed and frowned upon.

I determined to throw up my appointments, leave a place I hated, and trust to some other means of procuring my bread and cheese. My wife, who hated the hospital more than I

did, applauded my resolution. I heard of this curacy being vacant, accepted it, and resigned my chaplaincy.

I gave up all I had to my creditors, and they, really believing that I was beaten by circumstances over which I had no control, released me from the remainder. Some kind friends furnished me with a supply, which enabled me to furnish my cottage; and, I declare to you, that I was happier as a poor curate than I had been as a rich hospital master.

There was but one drawback, and a serious one it was—my wife's continued illness, which terminated fatally, but not until it had involved me in great expenses.

"But your living! you have not told this gentleman how you obtained it," said Mr. Woodward.

In a very strange manner. I saw in the newspaper, among a list of the new administration, the name of one with whom I had been intimate at school. We had been in the same forms together for several years, and, though he was nobly born, he had always shown a

strong friendship for me. I resolved to write to him, to remind him of his old schoolfellow, to congratulate him on his success as a politician, and to ask his interest in my behalf. I did so. I told him all the events of my life and my present poverty.

I received a kind answer from him by return of post. He had not forgotten me, nor our old schoolboy days, and should be happy to assist me if I could point out to him how it was to be done.

I wrote him word that a small living in the gift of one of his colleagues was vacant, and begged him to ask him to appoint me to it.

I received a second letter, begging me to dine with him at his private residence on a certain day. I went up, was introduced to the patron of the living, who made a third at the dinner-table. After the servants had retired, my friend "drew me out." I told all my adventures, excited the sympathy of his colleague, and returned home with the presentation to the rectory I coveted in my pocket. I have my £200 per annum, and am reconciled to my lot. I can give a friend a

plain dinner and a glass of good ale, and pity the man who is too proud to come and dine with me.

“The curate,” said I, as we walked back, “is doubtless now fully aware of the value of a shilling, after all his imprudences and consequent sufferings.”

“Not in the least,” replied Mr. Woodward ; “if he had but one shilling in his pocket, which, I believe, is often the case, and a poor man applied to him for aid, he would give him ninepence of it. There is not a subscription got up in this neighbourhood that is not headed with the name of the curate of Mossbury.”

CHAPTER VII.

"Come, children, come," said Mr. Woodward, the vicar of Clearstream, "you look all hot and nearly done with your romps, but you must make haste. Mr. Scribbler and I have been listening to Mr. Flexible's adventures until we have brought dinner-time upon us. Mr. Worthington will be waiting for us and his dinner. His vexation at its not being ready at the exact moment for which he has made up his stomach, will bring on a fit of indigestion, and perhaps gout. Come, sir, we must not incur the black looks of Mrs. Trusty."

I, to use a vulgar phrase, "put my best leg foremost," and the children, as if they

had not taken more exercise than a greyhound in training, hopped about and went ahead as lively as ever; but then they had no fat about the heart, as I have, in spite of all the exercise I take.

The clock of Clearstream church struck four, or, as they in that country say, *hit* four, just as we got to the last hedgerow which separates the water-meads from the high-road.

“*Per Jovem!* there is punctuality. The carriage is just at the gate to a minute,” said the vicar, as he scrambled over the last stile in very good style.

I followed, and got to the parsonage gate just in time to hear Zachariah address his cherubs with the usual speech—

“Who-oh! gently there, my beauties; easy does it—don’t hurry, you fiery rogues—lots of time—who-oh!—ain’t we earnt our oats?”

I expected to hear from the inside of the carriage, which was closed to keep off the dust and sun, the rector’s voice, uttering the accustomed “humph!—haugh, eh?” but I did not.

Mr. Woodward nodded kindly to Zachariah, who of course did not see it, being engaged in admiring his cherubs, and then opened the carriage-door.

The carriage was empty !

“ Why, Zachariah, where is your master ? ”

“ Gently, Juggenel—steady, there, Brown Bury—don’t go to be earning more oats—easy does it. Who?—what?—why, inside, of course—boxed up by old mother Trusty. No hurry—lots of time,” replied Zachariah.

“ He is not in the carriage,” said the vicar.

“ Don’t go to be vicious—no nonsense, or I must put on the kicking-strap. Put your spectacles on, if you can’t see clearly without—easy does it.”

“ The carriage is empty,” said I. “ Get off your box and examine it yourself.”

“ Don’t *you* be in a’ hurry—take it quiet—easy does it—lots of time. If master ain’t *in*, he must have jumped *out* as we came along ; and that ain’t easy, for we earnt our oats, and master’s rather puffy about the fetlocks, and a little over at knee. He’s not the man to take a leap for fun.”

"But where is he?" inquired the vicar.

Zachariah condescended to look round into the front windows of the carriage. When he saw that it was untenanted, he gave a stare of mingled surprise and alarm, uttered a prolonged whew! and sprung off his coach-box to the ground. He looked into the carriage, turned up the squabs, and patted the lining all round, as if he expected to find his master concealed beneath it.

When he found that his search was vain, he looked round at us with a face in which grief and surprise were oddly blended. His impudent, self-satisfied grin was gone.

"Are you sure he was in the carriage when you started?" I inquired.

"Positive: as certain as oats ain't split-beans. I heard Benjamin slam-to the door," said Zachariah, perspiring exceedingly.

"Drive back, and see what is become of him," said the vicar.

"I will—I will—easy does it—no hurry—my poor dear master! What will old mother Trusty say, if I lose him?—lots of time," said Zachariah, as he sprung to his seat. He

whisked Juggenel and Brown Bury round so short and quickly, that he well-nigh dislocated their shoulders. He laid the whip across their loins, slacked his hand, set off full gallop, and promised them lots of oats if they would only earn them by extra speed.

We watched him as far as we could see him. His whip was still at work just as he turned the corner. We were about to enter the garden with Mr. Flexible, who had joined us, when we saw the rector of Rushley, looking hot and angry, come out of the gate which opened into the water-meads, through which the footpath led to his parsonage. He was followed by Benjamin, who carried a very large umbrella and a thick great-coat in one hand, a lantern and a huge pair of clogs in the other.

"Where is that, eh?—Good morning, gentlemen—where is that Bæotian-minded, stupid fellow, Zachariah—Zachariah Bond, eh? How do you do, Mr. Scribbler?—I will discharge the disobliging, conceited menial.—Mr. Flexible, I hope you are well.—Where are my horses and carriage?—those valuable

animals—humph—haugh—I have not a dry thread about me, eh?"

"Come along—don't stand in the hot sun—take it cool"—said Benjamin, leading his irate master into the porch of the house.

Mr. Woodward and I explained to him, as he was forced along, that Zachariah had arrived without him, and was gone back to seek him.

"Then it was he we heard galloping!" said the rector.

"Not he, but the horses," said Benjamin; "but never you mind—don't thicken *your* blood. Leave him to old mother Trusty; she'll operate upon him."

To the various questions by which we endeavoured to elucidate the mystery that puzzled us, Mr. Worthington answered, that just as he was stepping into the carriage, Mrs. Trusty had insisted upon his going back into the house until the carriage was properly closed, as she was sure that the air was very damp from the rain that had fallen in the night. The rector resisted for some time, as he knew his housekeeper would make him

promise to shut the windows close, to the risk of his being suffocated.

She, however, prevailed by threatening to "advertise — look out for another place — do something or other, if all her care was not appreciated." The rector then obeyed. Benjamin closed the carriage, shut the door with a bang, to show his approval of his sister's authoritativeness, and went into the house to tell his master to "come along."

Zachariah, who never took his eyes off his horses, concluded that the report of the door meant "all right — drive on, coachman." Before his master, who was detained by Mrs. Trusty receiving orders to "tie up properly, and not be home a minute after nine—on pain of her advertising, looking out, and doing something or other," could reach the front door, he had got nearly a quarter of a mile on his journey.

With great difficulty the rector had prevailed upon Mrs. Trusty to allow him to walk over, and then only on condition that Benjamin went with him, with clogs, coat, and um-

rella, and that he promised not to walk in the long grass, or at a rapid rate.

Benjamin, having seen his master wash himself in lukewarm water, and properly cooled down before he went in to dinner, set off to see if Juggenel and Brown Bury were or were not injured by their unwonted rate of travelling, and to hear Mrs. Trusty operate lingually on the delinquent.

CHAPTER VIII.

Miss Woodward had been in a fidget all the time Benjamin was fidgeting about his master, lest her dinner should be spoiled. We sat down and found the crayfish-soup excellent, and the stewed eels inimitable—pure and free from oil. The quarter of lamb, which I had ventured to purchase and send as a present, was done to a turn, looked gloriously brown amidst its coating of fresh green parsley, and seemed to cry, “Come, eat me.” The salad was crisp and well mixed—the tarts and custards delicious; and, in spite of a very hearty breakfast, and a rather solid lunch, we showed our estimation of the lady’s cookery.

Mr. Worthington being freed from the influence of the evil eye of his housekeeper and servants, gave full scope to his powers of nourishing the body, and indulged in copious libations of ale, which were strictly prohibited at home.

It was not until the business of eating was prorogued to the next session, that he ventured to catch the eye of the chairman, and beg leave to address the members at the table.

“ I think — I rather opine, at least — that we have all made a very excellent dinner — humph ! — haugh ! — eh ? ”

His proposition was carried without a dissenting voice.

When Miss Woodward left us in possession of the room, and a bottle of excellent port, our discourse ran upon the merits of the county members, the activity of country magistrates and parish constables, the ill effects of alehouses and dissenting chapels, the benefits of Sunday and infant schools, and such other subjects as country parsons are wont to discuss.

In the midst of our conversation, we heard a most musical throat, giving vent to a new tune in a loud whistle. The whistle was succeeded by a snatch of a song, and the song followed by a loud humming in imitation of all sorts of instruments playing a grand overture.

"Here comes the curate of Squashyfield, I am sure," said the vicar.

"I am glad of it," said Mr. Worthington
"He is a man I like—he is very..."

"Harmonious," said Mr. Flexible; "and very agreeable when he talks on any other subject but music, and does not begin singing. When he is once wound up and set going, he never stops, like a musical snuff-box, until he is run down."

Home—home—home, sweet home,
sang the same voice we had heard before.
The knocker went to the tune, keeping time exactly.

The children ran to open it, and let the curate in.

Oh! the days when I was young,

sang the curate, as he shook hands with them first, and then kissed them to the air of

I've toy'd and I've prattled with fifty fair maids,
And kissed them oft, do you see.

The children screamed and shouted with delight, but were restrained with

Cease, rude Bore-us, blustering railers,

just as their father, opening the dining-room door, begged Mr. Quaverton to walk in and join us, which he did to the tune of

Flow, thou regal, purple stream.

On being introduced to me, the only one unknown to him present, he shook me kindly by the hand, and imitated a French horn to the air of

When my hand thus I proffer.

The vicar pushed a wine-glass towards him, and bade him help himself, which he did, and whistled

By the gaily circling glass.

"I am sorry to interrupt the harmony of the evening, but pray forget 'that strain

again,' and let us have a little of your conversation, Quaverton," said Mr. Flexible.

Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear,
sang Mr. Quaverton, and then begged pardon,
and promised, in a hum imitatory of a keyed
bugle, not to

Strike the harp in praise of Bragela
again, all the evening, but to

Breathe not his name.

Mr. Flexible expressed himself satisfied.
Mr. Quaverton filled his glass a second time,
and, forgetting his promise, sang

Wine, rosy wine,

ere he quaffed its contents, and hummed, in
the tones of a clarionet,

If you doubt what I say, take a bumper and try.

No one applauded him or encored his song,
so he remained silent and drummed some
tune or other on the table, confining the
music to his own organ; like a friend of
mine, a musico-fanatic, who, not to annoy
his family, used to acquire rapidity of finger-

ing on a violin, by practising all night long with a well-greased bow.

“ Pray,” said the rector of Rushley, “ has any thing been heard of your rector yet, Mr. Quaverton?”

“ Not a word—

Not a sound was heard, not a funeral note.

That is, we are as much in the dark about him as ever.”

“ Then we are not to lose you yet, I suppose?” said our host.

“ Nothing yet has happened to bid me

Leave this gay and festive scene,

and I am glad of it. I like this country, and I like you, my friends, too well to wish to go

Over the hills and far away ;

though I should be glad to ascertain the fate of my ill-fated rector. He may be singing,

They mourn me dead in my father's hall ;
while he ought to be humming,

A weary pilgrim weak I falter,

as he wanders about

On the margin of fair Zurich's waters ;

or calls to his tartar groom,

Oh ! give me but my Arab steed ;

or is

Peaceful slumbering on the ocean."

"Really," said Mr. Flexible, "you are incorrigible, Quaverton. Pray cease—"

Cease your funning,

sang Mr. Quaverton. "That is what you mean. I will—by

Glorious Apollo, who from on high beheld us.

I will. There, that shall be

The last rose of summer.

I will not sing again unless you ask me to

Strike, strike the light guitar."

"A very odd man was your rector, sir,—
a very odd individual—humph !—haugh !—
eh?" said Mr. Worthington.

"I knew but little of him. He was not sociable—indeed, I only knew him by sight.

I called on him three times, but he would not. . . .”

Open wide the castle's gates,
sang the curate of Squashyfield.

“ See you,” said Mr. Worthington.

“ He would see no one,” said the vicar.
“ He confined himself to the house, and was,
I believe, very miserable.”

Away with melancholy,
whistled Mr. Quaverton, and then *said*, “ I
have lately heard the whole of his little his-
tory. If you are curious to know it, I shall
be very happy to tell it you if you will

Listen to my story, while seated in my glory.”

“ You had better sing it at once, for you
seem inclined to do nothing else,” said the
curate of Mossbury. I will quote a song for
once, and say to you,

Oh ! breathe no more that simple air ;
but tell us a matter-of-fact in a matter-of-
fact way.”

Mr. Quaverton did tell his story, but he
interlarded the narrative with so many scraps

of songs and fag-ends of tunes, whistlings, and orchestral-accompanied-imitations, including bells and triangles, that it would be tedious for me to write them, and for my reader to decipher them; so I will e'en tell the story, such as it is, myself.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Camomile Brown was the principal, because he was the only apothecary in a small borough town, in a midland county. This town, as it would be imprudent to publish its real name, for there are now six general practitioners starving within its precincts, every one of whom would accuse me of showing *him* up, I shall call Bridgetown. This name is not unsuitable, for it has a bridge over a river which crosses the London Road, which is so ingeniously contrived that only one vehicle can pass it at a time, and that to the detriment of any foot-passenger who cannot get out of its way.

Brown was one of the old school of apothecaries, a race, fortunately for the afflicted

with diseases, now nearly extinct. He was an uneducated man, and as ignorant as a coach-horse. He had been brought up over the pestle and mortar. He could pulverize rhubarb and ginger, manufacture boluses and black-draughts, and infuse and decoct bestialities with any body. As to the theory of medicine, he boldly declared it was all humbug; or as he, after the method of the Bridgetownians, pronounced it, "hall umbug." Practice was every thing with him, and very simple and monotonous his mode of practice was. Let what would ail his patient, his invariable rule was to give an emetic overnight, a drastic cathartic first thing in the morning, a strong febrifuge in the middle of the day, and a sudorific and soporific combined at night. For a month afterwards, if his patient lived so long, he exhibited six effervescing draughts in the course of every twenty-four hours, and left it to nature and the constitution to do the rest—except pay his bill.

The inhabitants of Bridgetown were forced to submit to this severe treatment, for there

was no other medical except a cow-doctor within a dozen miles of the borough. Brown, therefore, was despotic. If any fond and anxious parents expostulated with him for reducing a spoilt child to a skeleton, Brown coolly abused them. He told them to "pay him his little account, and send for somebody else."

It is very probable that some of them would have clubbed together to support a more lenient and polite apothecary, had not Brown been blessed with a popular wife and an overflowing nursery of children, who came two at a time, like a bailiff and his follower. Brown knew that he was pitied on account of his wife's popularity and populating propensities, and he presumed upon it. He even threatened to galvanize the mayor and town-clerk of the borough for going to sleep in the corporation-pew on Sunday afternoons, and that, too, when he knew that they dined between the services. He intimated a design of poisoning the man who bore the *mace*, because he refused to stir up the mayor with it when he was snoring somniferously.

These indignities were submitted to, because, as Brown himself smilingly said, "*nissussitus non abet legs.*"

As this bit of apothecary's Latin was quoted to the town-clerk at a corporation-dinner, and was by him translated to the mayor to mean that the municipal body had not a leg to stand upon, it gave very serious offence indeed. Fortunately, one of the borough parsons, who was mayor's chaplain for the year, recollected enough of his latinity to give the quotation and the translation of it correctly. Mr. Brown thanked him, and said it was "exactly what he meant; but that he had endeavoured to forget his Latin, as he had found it interfere with his practice."

The chaplain gave a peculiar smile — it might have been a sneer — at this bold assertion, and told the mayor, loudly enough to be heard by Brown, that "it was easy to forget what one had never learnt."

Brown would have argued the matter, had he not thought it possible that a few unanswerable questions might have been put to him touching the school in which he had ac-

quired the rudiments of the Latin tongue. He said nothing, but resolved to take it out of the impudent parson by means of emetics and detergents, the very first time he was called in to relieve him of a fit of gout. This prospect of revenge was pleasant, but Camomile Brown passed an unpleasant evening; for the mayor had laughed loudly at his chaplain's remark, and all the corporation, as in duty bound, had followed his example.

As Brown lay awake in his bed that night, suffering from indigestion, he acknowledged his classical deficiency — to himself. It was too late for him to make up for the deficiency in his own person, so he resolved that his eldest son should learn Latin enough for two.

Though Camomile Brown junior was only six years old, he entered him at the borough grammar-school the very next morning. He told the master, who was compelled by statute to limit his teaching to the dead languages, and, consequently, seldom had a town pupil, to push his son on in Latin and Greek, and set him a long Latin or Greek exercise to do

at home of an evening, which he — Brown *père*—would supervise and correct. He pretended to do so once or twice, and got the boy a sound flogging for inventing words not to be found in a polyglot lexicon, and showing up a chaos of all the parts of speech jumbled promiscuously together.

Little Brown expostulated and explained. The master wrote to his father, and begged him not to interfere, and ensure his son punishment corporeal, by attempting to do what he knew nothing about. Brown was enraged at this insult; but still more at the quotation which followed, "*ne sutor*," &c. Brown made his son look out *sutor* in the dictionary; and, when he heard it was Latin for a *cobbler*, he flew into a violent rage, as he had no doubt it implied an indelicate allusion to the trade of his father, who had been a most respectable shoemaker. He would have damaged the grammar-school by removing his son immediately, had he been able to get him a first-rate education for one guinea a quarter, taken out in galenicals, any where else. This was not to be done, so he put up with the insult, and

consoled himself with his favourite quotation, "*nissussitus non abet legs.*"

Little Camomile Brown "favoured his mother," as the saying is. He had plenty of brains, and a predisposition to exercise them. All the bumps indicatory of studiousness and perseverance were strongly developed on his cranium. He worked hard, and got on very rapidly indeed; so much so, that Brown senior was delighted, and said he had no doubt that if his son continued to go on as he had begun, he would make almost as good a classical scholar as his father.

His schoolmaster was so much pleased with the boy, that he paid him the same attention as he did to his well-paid-for private pupils. He even lent him books, which his father refused to supply him with, under the plea that they would be of no use to him in after-life in the surgery. He said, moreover, that four guineas a year ought to include every thing, as the master had a good house to live in, and £50 per annum for *teaching* the free boys *only*.

"What was the four guineas extra for, if it

was not for books—without which he could not teach them?”

Brown senior meant to put his son into the surgery, as he called the shop, as soon as he could, to relieve himself of the trouble of making up medicines. As soon as the boy could dispense, he thought his own services might be dispensed with. He made the experiment, and went out to an evening party, leaving little Camomile to try his hand at an effervescing draught. The boy, however, had a long theme to write for a prize; and, as he meditated on the thesis while he filled the phials, he made the mixture so strong, that it blew the bottles to pieces, and knocked out several of the window-panes.

Brown was irate, called his boy a fool, and thrashed him soundly. He did more—he tore up the theme that was the cause of the mischief, and threw the scraps into the fire. The boy took the abuse and flogging submissively, and got up before it was light on the following morning to re-write his exercise.

Though several egregious blunders were committed by his son, in the process of ini-

tiating him into the mysteries of the pharmacopœia, the father was determined to persevere. He was resolved to be relieved of pounding and compounding, and did not choose to hire an assistant while his boy was, as he said, doing nothing.

The boy tried, and tried hard, to combine the attending to compound extracts of filthiness and compound words in his dictionaries, but it would not do. The root of a Greek verb had more charms for him than a root of rhubarb, liquorice, or any other medicinal herb. Infusions were set aside for inflexions, decoctions yielded to declensions of nouns, and tinctures gave place to theorems.

The boy made several ridiculous but innocuous mistakes, such as ordering emetics to be used as embrocations, and pills to be applied instead of leeches, for which he got laughed at by the patients, and punished by his impatient father. The punishment he could bear; the ridicule he could not. He resolved to be more attentive, and so escape being laughed at. He succeeded. He was not laughed at for exhibiting a very powerful

narcotic, "*pro re nata*," for the *infant just born*—as he supposed the words meant in dog-latin. The child died, and the coroner's jury would have brought in a verdict of *man-slaughter* had not the child proved to be a girl. They returned "*felo de se*," because they had never heard of a verdict of woman-slaughter in their lives.

Brown senior threatened to smash his son to a powder in the large iron pestle and mortar. Little Camomile, however, ran away—to school. He refused to return home, unless he was exempted from practising what might lead to the perpetration of many more murders. He had made up his mind not to break the sixth commandment again.

His father applied to the mayor for a writ of *habeas corpus* to bring up his son, but it was refused. The mayor, the town-clerk, the bailiffs and burgesses, the parsons of all denominations, and the inhabitants generally, took up the cause of the boy, who was likely to prove such a credit to the borough. They cried shame on the father, who wished to clap a pharmacopical extinguisher on the dawning

light of Bridgetown. He who refused to listen to the voice of nature and the cry of humanity yielded to the most sweet voices of his fellow-citizens and the cries of his patients—for they threatened to “introduce another practitioner, who would not poison babies by leaving his business to boobies—that is, boobies in mortar-practice.”

After this untoward incident, or accident, Master Camomile Brown pursued his studies uninterruptedly. He soon forgot the dying accents of the unfortunate baby in the accents of Greek words. He quickly passed and surpassed all his schoolfellows in parsing, and stood at the head of the school, a promising candidate for the vacant exhibition to Oxford. He passed a very good examination, and was elected *nem. con.* The bells of Bridgetown celebrated the event in triple bob-majors, and the town itself showed its joy by lighting itself up at night. Brown consented to his son's accepting the exhibition, and going to college, because he should have one the less to feed at home.

“You have £80 a-year of your own, young

man," said he; "spend it; but recollect, *nissussitus non abet legs*—that is, if you spend more, don't expect any assistance from me."

Camomile went to college. He read sixteen hours a-day. He never was absent from chapel, hall, or gates. He never went to a party; never gave a party in his own rooms. His only indulgence was breakfasting once a term with his tutor, and walking once a day to Joe Pullen's tree on Headington Hill. He was never seen to smile, even at a comedy of Terence or Aristophanes. The tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides, never extracted a tear from his eyes. He was too much engaged in the construction of the sentences to think of the matter of his author. He relieved his mind from the more serious business of study by refreshing it with an hour or two's composition of Sapphics and Alcaics, diversified now and then by a lively Iambic or Pindaric. Not to lose time, when he took his constitutional to Headington, he carried two or three Elzevirs in his pocket, and got up a chorus or an ode by heart, as he walked along.

He ate but little, and drank nothing but pure water; yet he grew obese. His linen never looked as white as his face did. His clothes fitted him too much. They were ill-made, and seemed to have been thrown upon him by chance. He was quizzed by the juniors out-college and in-college, but he was not conscious of it. He was equally unconscious of the favouring looks with which the dons regarded him. He had eyes and ears for nothing but his books and his lectures. He stayed up all the vacations, to the great annoyance of the cook, butler, and scout, who were obliged to come into college once or twice a-day to supply his unprofitable wants, instead of going out fishing, or joining a smoking party up or down the river.

In process of time, a scholarship fell vacant at a crack college, open to all the University. By his tutor's advice, he put down his name as a candidate at the bottom of a list of fifty. His signature carried such dismay into the host of his antagonists for the scholarship, that they withdrew from the contest, fairly beat a retreat, and left him in undisputed posses-

sion of the field. He was elected a scholar of — college, and put in possession of an additional £60 per annum.

What was he to do with £140 per annum? He remitted one-half of it to his kind mother for her sole and separate use, much to the disgust of his Galenical governor. He spent part of the remainder on his board and clothing, and the overplus in books, which he bought second-hand.

The height of his ambition, next to being a double-first classman, was to be a Fellow of his college and a college tutor. It is needless to say his ambition was gratified. No one opposed him for the fellowship, and he had the first tutorship that was vacant, as a reward for passing the best examination of the year.

Did Camomile Brown give up study when he had achieved the object of his ambition? No. He gave up Greek and Latin, and took to Hebrew; relieving the tedium of jots and tittles by a little light reading in Sanscrit and Chaldaic, with a seasoning of the German commentators.

Metaphysics he despised as much as he had formerly despised physic. He thought that both ought to be given to the dogs. He would have none on't. He plunged all at once into polemics, gave up every other pursuit for theology, and got ordained on purpose to publish his notions on some deeply abstruse subjects from the pulpit of St. Mary's. For the same reason he solicited the Bampton lectureship, but was unsuccessful. His sermons were not popular. His style was not admired. From vice-chancellor down to vice-chancellor's poker-bearer, it was deemed a bore to be kept two hours and three-quarters listening to a most unmelodious voice; a combination of bumble-bee and trombone—whurring out sentiments "hard to be understood of the people," although they were illustrated by quotations from the original languages in which they first found vent.

The loss of the Bampton lectureship—not the profits of it, for those he cared not, except as far as his mother and little brothers and sisters were concerned—was a sad blow, and a great discouragement to Mr. Don

Brown, as the undergraduates called him. He shrunk into his rooms, and hid himself as sensitively as a snail retires within its shell whenever any one happens to touch its horns.

He spent one whole long vacation in rigid seclusion. He saw no one but his scout, and to him he never spoke. He took nothing but tea and toast ; allowed his letters, like parliamentary petitions, to lie on the table. He would not have enjoyed clean linen had not his scout served him as Guy Mannering served the dominie — taken away his foul clothes and left clean in their room, so that he was compelled to put them on, or lie in bed all day.

No one could imagine how he spent his time. His scout declared that he never wrote a line that he could see, or it would have been believed that he was preparing a book for the Clarendon Press. He also told the world that his well-filled library remained untouched, all but one little book—a small octavo, bound in sheepskin.

When the men came up in October, the bets ran high that Don Brown would astonish

the world of Oxford with something resulting from his seclusion. He did. The first evening the fellows assembled in the common-room, he entered with the second bottle of port; and, after rejecting the proffered hands of all his *quondam* friends, took a chair at a distance from the table, and pulled out his little sheepskin small octavo.

"Brown, a glass of wine!"

Brown shook his head.

"Port or sherry?"

Another shake more decidedly negative.

A look, and, if it must be owned, a wink, passed round the table.

A little fruit or a biscuit?"

"Neither," growled Brown.

After a little while, the senior Fellow, after telegraphing his fellow-fellows, inquired—

"What book have you there, Mister Brown?"

He laid great stress on the *mister*.

"The University Statutes," was the answer.

"An entertaining book," said a junior.

"Very, very, very," from all quarters.

"A book very little known," said the

senior, "and seldom read after matriculation."

"I have been getting up every statute," said Brown, "and I mean to have them put in force. I shall appeal to the chancellor, to parliament. I will cleanse the Augean stable of this pest-house. I feel as strong as Hercules in so laborious a cause."

"Hear, hear, hear," said the junior.

Brown regarded him for a moment fiercely. He looked at, and detected a smile on the faces of all the Fellows. He stamped heavily with his elephantine foot, put the statutes into his pocket, and, for the first time for six months, took a walk up to Joe Pullen, stopping now and then to grind the ground with his right foot, as if he were crushing a Lyrnean Hydra, or a garden-snail.

The Fellows all charitably agreed that he was mad, with the exception of the senior, who mitigated the severity of the general verdict, by hinting that he was merely a little cracked.

On the following morning, the head of ——— College received a request from Mr. Brown,

that he would call a seniority of the college, as he had matters of a serious import to lay before them. It was written in crabbed Latin, and headed—

PETITIO CHAMÆMELI SUBNIGRI, ARTIUM
MAGISTRI, HUIUS SOCIETATIS
SOCII ET TUTORIS.

Of course, his request was granted, and two o'clock the next day fixed for the meeting.

Not a man was absent. Every one was urged by curiosity, if not by a sense of duty, to attend.

Mr. Brown was punctual, and came in a new full dress-suit of black, covered with the Master of Arts dress-gown—the *toga*, with velvet sleeves, now worn by the Proctors alone. After a little hesitation and many profound bows, he read an address, which lasted nearly three hours, in which he made a formal demand that all the customs, habits, and manners of the university, as originally adopted, worn, and used, should be restored; among other things, that beer should be substituted for wine; brown short sit-upons (with the

gown and falling collar, or band) worn instead of trousers, blue coats with brass buttons, coloured waistcoats, and black stocks; that the men should breakfast at five of the morning, and at eleven in the forenoon sit down to dinner; take a moderate supper at six of the clock in the evening, and at eight retire to their dormitories. He finished by insisting on the restoration of the laudable custom of flogging the breech of the younger members over the buttery-hatch, in case they made a breach in any of the rules of the college. The mayor and corporation of Oxford, too, were again to be dragged up in a halter—a regular hempen Jack Ketch's suspender—to pay the fine required of them for their ancestors having permitted their fellow-townsmen to get the better of the undergraduates in a town-and-gown row.

A smile had illuminated the faces of his auditors during the recital of this his modest request. It had been succeeded by a general titter at the mention of the buttery-hatch, and at last burst out into open, undisguised laughter, in which the Head himself, though he

nearly bit a piece out of his cheek in trying to prevent so unseemly a proceeding, joined long and loudly.

Mr. Brown was amazed. He saw nothing to laugh at in the matter, and so he told them.

The head of the college threw a deprecating glance at his Fellows, and, with as steady a face as he could make up, informed Brown that they would consider his petition, and let him know the result of their consideration.

As soon as the matter reached the ears of the undergraduates, Mr. Brown received a great many humorous verses and funny letters on the subject. He also had some very witty caricatures sent to him, representing himself *in* the brown short sit-upons, and *out* of them on the hatch of the college buttery, with the college porter behind him inflicting the traditional punishment.

Brown was annoyed, but he persevered. When the college declined to interfere, he laid the matter before the chancellor, who said he knew nothing at all about such abstruse ques-

s, and referred him to his acting representative, the vice-chancellor, who turned him to Golgotha, as the assembly of heads of ses is called ; from them he got no notice whatever. He appealed to the parliamentary members of the university, who declared that they were so much engaged in watching over the interests of Oxford out of doors, that they had no time to listen to what was going on within her walls.

The bench of bishops said it was not a matter that concerned them, and the Primate of England and Metropolitan "wondered at a man's impudence," though he only *said* so to his brother of York.

Mr. Camomile Brown was so annoyed at the failure in superseding the innovations that had crept into university and college discipline in the lapse of years by a restoration to the practices of the earliest times, that he gave up his tutorship, and with it £400 per annum paid by terminal instalments. He would have resigned his Fellowship also, but he thought of his widowed mother and her family prevented so rash a proceeding—I say

widowed—for old Brown was killed by the introduction of a young practitioner, who deprived him of a portion of his patients, and all his despotic power in Bridgetown.

CHAPTER X.

st at this period, the living of Squashy-
which had lately been purchased by the
ge, fell vacant. Several of the senior
ws went down to see it. They found
the house and the church were comfort-
placed in a snipe-bog; and although they
very fond of snipes, they did not think
would be improved in flavour by being
out of their bedroom-windows.

the spot was reported to be aguish, and
y shook and they shivered," as Mr. Qua-
n sung (quoting "the queer little man,"
g that one of my most intimate friends
ten times a term for twenty years—
h every time he did sing it he declared
uld be the last), at the bare notion of

subjecting their persons to exposure to the malaria of that marshy situation.

Every one of the Fellows passed the living—that is, every one declined being appointed, instituted, and inducted to the rectory of Squashyfield, and condemned the college surveyor for expending the overplus of the college revenues on so unhealthy and so undesirable a piece of preferment.

It was offered to Mr. Camomile Brown. He was told that the spot was unhealthy, dull, and lonely. That was enough. He accepted it—was inducted, and read in to the parish-clerk, and the two churchwardens who were obliged to go to church in a punt.

“You may visit the spot now in summer-time, Mr. Scribbler,” said Mr. Quaverton to me, “and not deem it objectionable or unpleasant; but in winter—indeed for six months in the year—it is surrounded with floods

As deep as the rolling Zuyder-Zee.

I then retire as the waters rise, and leave it to the mercy of the snipes and wild-fowl until the waters subside again.”

Mr. Camomile Brown carried down a wag-

load of old books, and sufficient furniture
up four upstairs rooms—wisely consider-
ing that by such a prudential proceeding he
might beat the waters, which seldom rose,
except after the breaking up of a frost, above
tops of the downstairs windows.

He took down with him a past-the-middle-
college-bedmaker, to be cook, housemaid,
servant of-all-work. He gave her good
things, which alone reconciled her to the
solitary life she led, and to the privations to
which she was obliged to submit. The re-
minder of his income, after keeping back
enough for his scanty housekeeping, he re-
turned to his family.

He passed the first winter in entire seclu-
sion, and was only seen once, except by his
housekeeper; that was by the butcher, who
led his horse through the water once a
week for orders. On one of these his visits,
Camomile Brown threw open the win-
dow of his study bed-room, and abused him
in Hebrew and Sanscrit for sending him a leg
of mutton without a pope's-eye in it.
The man declared that Hepzibah, the cook,

had ordered a shoulder, and that shoulders never had no pope's-eyes in that part of Hampshire. Mr. Brown doubted the fact, and told him not to offend in the same unwarrantable way again.

When spring returned again, and the waters subsided, Squashyfield church was opened for divine service. The villagers flocked in crowds—that is, to the number of thirty or forty, for the church would hold no more, and there were no more authentic Squashyfieldians for it to hold—to see and hear their new rector. They did not regard the fact of the church being still “a little dampish.” Curiosity to see the learned recluse whom the Oxford College had sent down to enlighten their dark minds, conquered all fears of ague, all apprehensions of rheumatism.

They wondered at his fat, flabby face, from out of which peered two eyes looking like the eyes of a parboiled codfish. They were astonished at his peculiar dress, for he had adopted the costume of the ancients, and wore the black, close-fitting silk cap, the falling white collar, and the Geneva gown. They

d in whispers that he was just like a
an—which is the name for those eccen-
looking figures that are dressed out and
up in cornfields to frighten away corn-
mowing crows and other birds.

e bumble-bee'd and tromboned through
prayers in a most unintelligible and un-
satisfactory manner.

e parishioners did not care for that—
body could *read* the prayers out of a
prayer-book. The sermon was what they
wanted to hear. That would test his highly-
developed abilities.

selected one of the prophecies of Daniel
as his text, and gave them a three-hours'
exposition of his view of its meaning, proving
the correctness of it by quoting largely from
ancient authors in various languages; and
concluded by advising them not to take all
that he said as granted, but to read the authors he
quoted themselves.

And his parishioners agreed that it was a
very clever sermon—beat the vicar of Clear-
water's discourses out and out—that he cer-
tainly was a very clever man, and earned the

amount of his tithes—but they never went to hear him again, and nicknamed him Parson Spoil-pudding.

Though he had no congregation beyond Hepzibah and his clerk, he always did the full service, and preached an original sermon every Sunday. Hepzibah did not pretend to listen to what she could not understand, but went tranquilly to sleep in the corner of her pew until it was ended. The clerk amused himself with Sternhold and Hopkins, varied now and then by Tate and Brady.

Of occasioned duties, as they are called, he had but few, for the parish was very small. He never had to marry a couple, as, in the only wedding that took place among his parishioners while he resided, the lady belonged to an adjoining village. He managed to bury a corpse very decently, but very nearly buried himself with it, as he was walking quietly into the grave instead of the church-door at the conclusion of the service.

A child was brought to him to be baptized. He insisted on the font being filled

water and dipping it — according to
nt usage. The mother entreated him
inkle the child, as it was rather deli-

He was firm, though the child was
a. He seized the infant and soused it
othes and all, until he had well nigh
ated it, and sent the mother home with
impression on her weak mind that he
meant to drown it out of spite, because
d no children of his own.

was never troubled with a second chris-
g. He did a great deal of mischief in
ttle parish from a very good motive.
charities were unbounded and indiscri-
e. Every idle, dissolute body in the
had only to trump up a story of illness
nt, and they were sure to be supplied
large sums of money by “the foolish
arson,” as they called him. Hepzibah
tulated once, and explained to him the
ief he was doing by encouraging idle-
and drunkenness. He gave her a severe
and a long lecture—dismissed her from
resence, telling her to scour her pots

his trombone voice; "I shall not dine with you—you will never dine with me."

The others he refused to see, but sent them the same uncourteous message by Mrs. Hepzibah. Of course they did not call again.

An illness the result of confinement and want of exercise—compelled him, or rather his housekeeper who was afraid he was dying, to call in medical aid. He told the apothecary that he was aware of all the tricks of his trade—explained to him that he had compounded filthiness in his youth in his father's surgery, and gave him a five-pound note to give him his advice and a prescription, and never to come near him again until he was sent for. The man stared, pocketed the unexpected but agreeable donation, told him to take Epsom salts every morning for a month, and four hours exercise in his garden or about the fields every day, and took his departure. He never ventured again to beard the lion in his den.

Mr. Camomile Brown essayed to take exercise in the neighbouring fields, and splashed boldly through the water-meads daily, until

aid himself up with a cold and sore-throat. Mrs. Hepzibah suggested that the road would be a more advisable path to take. Camomile tried it and liked it, until he met a labourer or two in his walks, who refused to greet the parson civilly. He, however, was nervous and frightened. He started off like a hare, and turned and doubled back through hedgerows and over ditches, until he reached his home by a circuitous path. The neighbours soon heard of his dislike to meet any of them. They made a point of annoying him at all opportunities. It was great fun to hunt down a parson; so they waylaid him, and as soon as he attempted to avoid them and bolted, they ran after him, until he ran to ground near the parsonage.

His annoyance was unbearable. He was obliged to give up all exercise, and confine himself to his room again. Hepzibah, who desired a return of his illness, recommended that he should work in his garden, which he could do without fear of interruption. He adopted her advice, and became a most assiduous cultivator of cabbages and other esculents.

It happened one day, while he was busied in his new occupation, that the archdeacon, attended by a brace of rural deans, came in the course of their rounds to view the state of the church and parsonage of Squashyfield.

Mr. Camomile Brown was not aware of their approach until he raised his head to listen to the meaning of the high-toned remonstrances of his housekeeper. He merely heard the words, "Tell ye he wunt—he's engaged—you morn't come in," to convince him some one was forcing an entrance into his premises. He seized his spade, shouldered it, and marched to her aid. The moment he opened the back or garden door, which commanded a view of the front door through a long passage, he saw a gentleman in a black clerico-cut coat and a shovel hat. It occurred to him that it was the bishop: at any rate, it was some divine of dignity, by whom he did not choose to be seen in working trim; that is, with his coat and waistcoat off, and his knees unbuttoned.

He threw down his spade, and bolted as quickly as he could to the bottom of the garden.

he archdeacon saw him; and, as he really
ed to confer with him officially, and had
ably heard by report that he was shy in
iving callers, he put Mrs. Hepzibah gently
ne side, and made a rush along the pas-
after his quarry. The rural deans fol-
d the example set them by the archdeacon.
n the trio had reached the back-door, they
ed round for the rector of Squashyfield,
he was nowhere to be seen. They called
most reverend and clear tone on the Re-
nd Camomile Brown to appear; but that
leman did not put in his appearance. He
quatted, like a hare, behind some rasp-
-bushes, trembling and panting. One of
rural deans caught sight of his white shirt-
es, and cried out, "There he is!"
he trio walked towards him. Ere they
d reach him, Camomile essayed to jump
alings; he failed. He retreated a few
s, and then bolted *at* the palings, which
about four inches apart from each other,
formed of the staves of sugar-casks. The
tus with which he rushed at them carried
through; but, alas! when he rose from

the ground, he found that he had carried three palings and part of the top rail with him, and that they had adhered to his neck much after the manner of that ingenious contrivance wherewith pigs are prevented from straying out of bounds.

He tried all he could to disengage himself from the disagreeable trap in which he was caught; he struggled, he kicked, he scrambled about; but all to no purpose. The tenpenny nails were too firmly clenched to be forced out; and in this state Mr. Camomile Brown was obliged to receive the archdeacon and two rural deans.

He looked confused, perspired violently, felt very faint, his legs trembled under him; he uttered a deep, trombone groan, and sunk to the ground. He tried to grub a hole with his fingers to bury himself in, and polluted his hair in the dust.

The archdeacon and his brethren were distressed to see the distressed situation of the rector. They summoned Mrs. Hepzibah to attend upon him, and retired within the house, saying that they would wait patiently until

master was fit, from dress and restoration of moral courage, to see and converse with him.

Hepzibah appeared, after they had waited nearly an hour, and told them that her master was too ill, too agitated, to see and speak to them; that he begged they would retire, and that he would answer them what queries they had to put to him in private, and he would reply to them.

Of course they complied with his request, and left him in a miserable state of nervousness, and so upset by his degrading disaster, that he was again induced to send for the doctor.

The apothecary was alarmed. He had never seen so bad a case of nervous irritability. It verged on mania. He advised Mrs. Hepzibah to summon his relatives to receive his patient, and an attorney to make his last

Mrs. Hepzibah could not write; but, from her instructions, the apothecary wrote a note to his patient's mother, and despatched it to her by that night's post. He gave her a strong composing draught, and left him,

promising Mrs. Hepzibah that he would return on the following afternoon, and meet the relations, who would probably be arrived by that time.

His mother did arrive, and brought as many little Browns with her as the postchaise would hold. They rushed to his room in a body, and were surprised to see him calmly seated at his reading-table, writing answers to the archdeacon's questions touching the repairs required at the church and parsonage. The draught had operated immediately, and Camomile was himself again.

He received his mother very kindly, and fell upon his brothers' and sisters' necks and kissed them. He had only seen them on one occasion since his leaving Bridgetown for college, and that was when he went home to attend his father's funeral. They, however, were indebted to him for a good education, and for many indulgences which their mother's limited means would have rendered unattainable. They loved him for his worth and goodness, but they thought him a very odd man.

After asking the names of each of his family

who were present, Camomile Brown ordered Mrs. Hepzibah to prepare some provisions for the party, that they might refresh themselves before they set out on their return.

This was too plain a hint to be mistaken. They took it. While the children—as the young men and women were still called, and considered, too, by their elder brother—were invading the limited contents of the Squashy-field larder below stairs, their mother remained above to talk with her good but eccentric son. He chid him for leading so secluded a life; gave him a great deal of good advice; recommended him to seek society; and, above all things, to look out for a person who would make him a careful and comforting companion, and marry her.

Mr. Brown promised faithfully to take these matters into his serious consideration, and to report to her the results.

His mother quitted him, not doubting that he would do as he had promised her.

He did; and on the following Sunday published, himself, the bans of marriage between Camomile Brown, bachelor, and Hepzibah

Grimely, spinster. As no one but the clerk and Hepzibah herself heard him ask the question, of course no one had any just cause or impediment to allege why the parties he named should not be joined together in holy matrimony.

The vicar of Clearstream performed the ceremony. He walked with the indissolubly contracted parties from the church to the rectory. He took one glass of home-made wine, and drank health and happiness to them, and left them, when the husband threw off his coat and waistcoat to work in his garden, and the wife put on her checked apron to polish the study candlesticks.

How he spent the honeymoon was never known, as Mrs. Camomile Brown—*née* Grimely—never disclosed the secret. At the end of the month, the bridegroom went out to take a walk, greatly to the amazement of his bride. To her much greater astonishment, he never returned from his walk.

“He has not been seen from that day to this, and it is now more than two years ago,” said Mr. Woodward.

“*Erupit — evasit* — humph ! haugh ! eh ?”
said the rector of Rushley. “No great loss,
either—eh?”

“Was no search made for him?” I in-
quired.

They sought him that night and they sought him next
day,

said Mr. Quaverton.

“Yes, sir,” said Mr. Flexible, after a *pish*
at Mr. Quaverton. “He was dragged for, ad-
vertised for, searched for every where, but
without effect.”

“Can his widow give no guess at his fate?”

“All she knows is, that he talked in his
sleep about the conversion of the King and
Queen of the Caribbee or Cannibal Islands,
and about learning the true pronunciation of
the Arabic in a pilgrimage to Mecca or Bag-
dad, she don’t remember which,” said Mr.
Quaverton, and imitated a hautboy to the
tune of

Here awa, there awa, &c.

“So you see, sir; humph ! haugh ! eh ? he
a non-resident rector, and his living is se-

questrated," said the rector of Rushley, as the clock struck nine; and he, having the fear of Mrs. Trusty before his eyes, rose to return home, at the same time expressing his surprise that Mr. Camomile Brown should be so weak as to be governed by his house-keeper.

Benjamin came in and said, "Come along — night air unwholesome — here's Zachariah with the carriage, and old Mother Trusty inside: she says you are to come along this instant."

Mr. Worthington hurried out and bustled into his carriage, though Zachariah advised him to "take it easy," and assured him that there was "lots of time."

CHAPTER XI.

After the recital of Mr. Camomile Brown's strange story, I felt an anxious wish to see the rectory and parish church of Squashyfield, in which he had vanished so suddenly and mysteriously as to leave no mark of his trail behind.

I also longed to see, if possible, the woman—if fair she were—Mrs. Hepzibah Grimely, who had been wedded by wedlock to the dignity of Rectoress of Squashyfield and to the family name of Brown.

Mr. Quaverton, the curate appointed by the bishop, with the diocesan's consent, to perform the duties of the parish until the fate of the missing incumbent could be ascertained, had kindly offered to accompany me and show

me the road across the marshes and snipe-bogs, which was a dangerous feat for a stranger to undertake without a guide. The ground had been dug out in all directions to supply the poor with firing, and the farmers with ashes for manure.

It was an immense bed of rich deep peat earth, safe enough, if you knew where the solid parts were to be found; but highly dangerous if you happened to swerve either to the left or right. If you did not go right you were sure to be left—in some eight or ten feet of clammy, sticky, black mud, rendered tempting to the feet by a deceptive covering of bright green coarse grass. The more you floundered the deeper you sank. If no one was at hand to assist you, your fate was certain. There you stayed until the peat-diggers came to that particular spot and dug you out—a fine specimen of the human skeleton, or else converted into an adipose image of your former self.

The pits were haunted too at night by that mischievous inventor of blue lights, Mr. Wil-

n-of-the-Wisp. Many a poor labourer, who
s returning home from the alehouse, una-
to find his way or help himself, from too
ch zeal in worshipping the Cerevisian Dio-
us, has he favoured with a glimpse of his
tery lantern, and provided for for the night
leading him into a bed of rushes, where
was obliged to lie down and sleep off the
nes of his beer and tobacco, because he could
extricate himself.

Unearthly noises, too, were heard there by
r and night. The peasants attributed them
the revelries of the fairies, who were known
dwell there, by the deep emerald rings which
y formed on the turf in their mazy dances
the magic circle. Better informed people
signed them to the frogs, who assembled in
riads to carry on their nightly debates in
s their marshy parliament, and to the mole-
ckets, or cricket-moles, I forget which name
he correct one, who uttered shrill sharp
es during the day, to summon their fellows
her to the battle-fray, or the delights of
tual love.

Amidst these marshy, boggy, spots were large pools of black, dismal-looking water, but so clear, that the roots of plants, stones, and fish, might be seen at a great depth below the surface. They were formed in the pits which had been exhausted of their peat, and were filled by the water which filtered through the surrounding spongy soil.

In these pools dwelt a gigantic race of pikes and perches, which would have supplied the neighbouring peasantry with good wholesome food and plenty of it, if they had had cunning enough to catch them—which was no easy matter from the brilliancy of the water—or sense enough not to believe that they were some sort of demons placed there by the fairies to carry off all the little ducklings and goslings that strayed away from their anxious parents, and ventured to float upon these enchanted lakes.

The very description of their immense size and surprising numbers induced me to try my hand at taking some of them. I could get plenty of live baits, but then I had got nothing

gut minnow-tackle with me, which would be better than a gossamer, if tugged at by me, or even a very large perch.

Previously, therefore, to going to Squashy-I drove over to Winchester, and provided myself with some good strong gimp and some jack tackle, especially snap-hooks, for in the weedless pools were admirably good. I also bought a short, strong trolling-rod and a large thumb-reel, with sixty yards of half-hair-twist trolling-line.

Now," said I, "I will be a match for the fairer finny ones. I will try if their independent patrons have furnished them with appetites like the rest of their species."

Mr. Quaverton walked by my side, and he followed us, carrying a large kettle of gudgeons and a gaff-hook for landing the

I put one of the largest gudgeons on the snap-hook, and, standing at a great distance from the bank, threw it about twenty-yards into the pool.

There was a little stream down the middle, which carried the float very slowly along. I lay

down in such a position that I could see the float without being seen myself.

In less than five minutes my float vanished as if the fairies themselves had carried it off. I let loose several yards of line, and found them run through my fingers for nearly half a minute; then all was still—I knew the fish was gorging his prey, and struck him at once.

Never shall I forget the struggle: splash, dash, went the monster, a huge pike; first up the pool; then down it; then over to the opposite bank and back again, almost under my feet.

When I had reeled up my line, and the fish felt the hook again, away he went, uncoiling the line from the reel with a whirl that resembled the noise of some powerful machinery.

Again he stopped—again he rushed about, lashing the dark waters of the pool with his powerful tail, as I endeavoured to master his strugglings and bring his head above water.

Mr. Quaverton, quoting one of Dibdin's songs, begged I would

Haul in the slack of my cable,

allow him

To reef and steer

fish to land.

oots wanted to assist me, and declared I
ld be hauled into the water.

told them both to mind their own busi-
and get out of my way; for I was ex-
l, and had neither time nor inclination to
olite, when so fine a specimen of a fresh-
er shark was on my line. I was deter-
ed to master him by myself. I could
end on the strength of my resolution and
my tackle.

fter three-quarters of an hour's most
eable excitement—hope and fear of suc-
filling my mind by turns — I drew the
ost exhausted fish to the bank. I called
ny reserve guard, in the language of the
at hero of our era, "Now then, up and at

!"

Boots seized the gaff-hook, in the use of which I had previously instructed him, and was going to plunge it deep in the pike's jaws. A sudden qualm came over him when he saw the monster. All the stories he had heard of the iniquities committed by these fairy fish recurred to his mind, and he stood gazing into the monster's ill-looking face, and alarming well-armed jaws, without being able to use his landing-hook.

I believe I abused him heartily, and perhaps looked savage : what angler would not with a fish of twenty-five pounds weight at stake ! I called to Quaverton to land him, or to hold my line and rod while I did it myself. He preferred the latter mode of acting, as he was really frightened at the pike, though not from the same cause that had unnerved Boots. I bid him hold him firmly, and to keep his head above water, to slack his hand the moment I had gaffed him, and to allow me to land him.

I lay down flat on my stomach, dug the hook clean through his upper jaw, and swung him round with all my force. He flew off the gaff as he was whirled through the air, and,

on the head of Boots, knocked him
and lay kicking his last by his side,
Boots bellowed and screamed ten thou-
sands, which alarmed the wild ducks
neighbouring sedges, and caused them
to rise in a body from any sudden
and from a bed of rushes.

Will not weary the reader with an account
of further success. Let it suffice that
it was great; far beyond my warmest hopes.
I sent a basket of pike and perch as I sent
which had not been seen for years in Clear-
water; for even my landlord, fond as he was
of fishing, and skilled in taking trout, had no
idea of capturing the monsters of the Fairy

believe the common people thought me
a common clever fellow to rob the fairies;
they refused to eat of the fish from the
Clear water, and hinted their full belief
that I should meet with some sort of punish-
ment for poaching in the preserves of the
laird owners of the peat-pools. My friend,
Professor, having no fear of gnomes or

fairies, dressed one of the largest pikes in the Anglo-Saxon style, and, as he washed it down with a tumbler-glass of iced punch, pronounced it delicious—d——d delicious: the pre-adjective being used merely to corroborate the views of the commonalty of Clearstream, as to its being the property, by prescriptive right, of somebody diabolical.

Well, we arrived at Squashyfield Rectory, after disposing of the fish and fishing-tackle, not long before it was growing dusk. I was shown into the study of the missing rector—now the summer abode of Mr. Quaverton—by Mrs. Hepzibah Brown, *née* Grimely. It remained in the same state in which Mr. Camomile had left it—a dirty den—crowded with all sorts of books and papers, manuscripts, scraps and missals, jumbled together on shelves, tables, and on the floor, in most admirable disorder.

Mrs. Brown would not allow any thing to be touched. There was one table cleared, one chair sitable upon, that was enough for one man, and he a curate. All the rest was chaos, and such it was to remain until the owner of

has turned up again: which I believe
ever did.

Quaverton had in vain essayed to add
the littering of the room, by introducing
arts of musical instruments into it: but
Camomile Brown would not listen to him
music. He was forced to fill one of the
slimy parlours below with pianos, gui-
flutes, clarinets, and French horns — to
ere amidst the damp and foul smells to
upon them, or else content himself with
imitations of them up stairs in his bed-

the destruction of his favourite instruments
the damp was a strain on which he was
s harping, and complained, in A flat,
his “harp that once” was a thorough
one, now

Hung as mute on Squashyfield's walls,
As if its soul were *dead*;

as it was only suffering from the rheu-
s, its nerves unstrung, and shaking from

s. Hepzibah offered to make tea for us,

but I shuddered at the thought: *green* tea within those grass-green walls! red-hot twankay in such a Tartarus! bah! I begged a little *eau de vie* to keep life within me and qualify the water that was all around us, or a little mountain-dew to defeat the moist vapours of the morass, now fast rising in dark clammy masses round the house.

To ask was easy enough—to obtain was difficult. There was nothing to be had save sherry and port from the parson; tea, *sine* milk, from the lady.

I begged leave to retire for the night, and seek the solace of mine inn.

“No, no,” said Mr. Quaverton, “although I cannot supply you with what you wish for, I have a neighbour, who lives on the other side of the hill above us, who can and will do so readily. I am anxious to introduce you to the only one of the Five Incumbents whom, with the exception of my runaway rector, you have not yet met. We will walk across yon pit, over the stile, along the river’s banks, through the coppice of nutwood, mount those rising meadows, and then we

be at Ditchingly Parsonage. You see prettily placed above the damp and ups, and commands a fine view of the valley below it. Come, I must introduce you to Mr. Akinside. He is a worthy afflicted man, and seldom comes against us, though we always hail him with joy when he does join us.

The wealthy fool has gold in store ;

That is not his case, nor does he

Still desire to grow richer.

—
Lives but for his God, his parish, and his

Give him but these, he asks no more.

Will find him cheerful, and enjoying

His own sweet home, his friend, and pitcher.

Is an excellent tap of homebrewed, so
'e along,' as Benjamin says, and taste

Is Mr. Akinside a married man?" said I,
g inquisitorially at my shooting-jacket—

or rather, from its present use, fishing-coat—and India-rubber boots.

“ He *was* married, and had a large family ; but now — never mind — come along : Miss Akinside does not regard the outside of a man, and the poor perpetual-curate, or subvicar, as Mr. Worthington will insist on calling him, is not too proud to receive a good sort of fellow, which we are weak enough to think you are, in any disguise, however humble.”

“ Or dirty,” said I.

Ten minutes’ sharp walking—I, for one, love that humble mode of travelling, and can step out — brought us to the door of Mr. Akinside’s parsonage.

A lovely child, about six or seven years of age, rushed out of an arbour in the garden to meet us. She sprang into Mr. Quaverton’s arms ; and, kissing him, told him she was so glad he was come, as her papa had been in very low spirits all the day. I was introduced in due form to Miss Akinside—or Blanche, as she was more commonly called. She accepted my offered hand with delight,

with the least in the world of pretended
ness, allowed me to kiss her bright red

soon as I had released her, she ran
us through the house, and, tapping
at a door at the extremity of the pas-
sage, told her father that Mr. Quaverton and
gentleman at the inn—for such was my
situation—were come to call on him.

She put up her little hand and beckoned
as soon as she heard her father say he
would be glad to see us.

He of course obeyed the signal. Qua-
verton led the way into a small but exceed-
ingly neat study, well furnished with books
every accessory to the pursuit of letters.

Quaverton was speedily made known to,
a thin, gentlemanly-looking man, who
greeted me with a manner more than kind.
There was something brotherly in his salute.
He seemed to greet me as one known to him
long, but separated from him by a long
absence. I felt that I had met a man whom
I should gladly have converted into a friend—

and yet I had not been in his society five minutes.

Quaverton chanted—opera-fashion—

Thou mayest call *spirits* from the vasty deep.

Mr. Akinside understood him—nodded to his little daughter, and in a few minutes I was furnished with what my exertions in killing pikes and perches, and my exposure to the gloomy dampness of Squashyfield parsonage and its surrounding peat-bogs, rendered almost un-do-without-able, which I think is a much more applicable word than indispensable.

I reversed the order of things; and, after my *chasse*, had a cup of exceedingly good coffee, and a lengthened chat with Mr. Akinside, who talked well on the literature of the day—indeed, on every subject that was started.

We chatted, indeed, so long, that it was too dark to find my way back again by the road I had come. I did not know any other. Mr. Akinside pressed me to stay and sleep at his house, and his little girl begged leave to

and his proposition. I, however, refused except their kind offer, because I knew mine host and hostess would expect me, if I did not put in my appearance, would have that I had been captured by some t or ghostess—there must be female ts, or the breed would be lost—in re- e for my poaching on their manor during day.

Mr. Quaverton offered to see me home. I pted his offer on condition he would be guest at the inn for the night. He con- ed, and we parted from Mr. Akinside a promise to call on him again on the owing day, after I had destroyed some e of the fairy fish, which I intended to do ey were in the humour to be enchanted n my baits.

When we arrived safely at mine inn, in e of Mr. Jack-o'-Lantern, an alias some- es assumed by Mr. Will-o'-the-Wisp, who d to involve us in many a dilemma, I found t the Vicar of Clearstream had been down ce, *in propria*, to summon me to the arage, and had sent messages innumerable

to say supper was waiting. I could not, however, go to supper, for I had provisioned my stomach for the night, and "could no more," except indulge in my baneful but delightful habit of smoking my one cigar, and applying my spirituous nightcap.

Boots was sent to say that I was returned with Mr. Quaverton; that we had taken our supper, and should be glad of Mr. Woodward's company for an hour before we sought our pillows.

The good fellow came and joined us in my private room. We illuminated, and, over the fragrant vapours of Havannahs and C'naster, I elicited the history of the sub-vicar of Ditchingly.

CHAPTER XII.

The war in the Peninsula was ended. The
d arch-agitator of the world, Napoleon,
banished to Elba. Peace was expected
eign triumphant over the earth. Our
ried troops, harassed by toil and worn
by long service, looked for ease, for re-
ment to their peaceful homes. Their
ds expected them. From the proudest
ce to the humblest cot, fathers and
hers, brothers and sisters, wives and chil-
, stood with open arms and ready to
race the long-looked for son, brother,
and, or father, who had escaped the
ls of the protracted warfare.
their hopes were blighted — their plans of
iness were defeated. Elba allowed the

tyrant to quit her confines. The Hannibal of modern days again set his foot on the soil of France. Myriads who had served under his banner, and were unfitted for the arts of peace, gladly saw the same banner again unfurled, and ranged themselves under the command of their former much-loved and prosperous commander.

The Bourbons trembled on the throne on which they had been replaced, against the will of a people intoxicated with what they deemed the delights of an empire founded on republican principles.

Again they heard the voices of those who, maddened with revolutionary fury, chanted the Marseilloise. The streets of Paris again resounded with shouts of

à bas

Les aristocrats ;

and the screams of women and children uttering "*A la lanterne—à bas les Bourbons*"—" *Vive Napoleon*"—" *Vive l'Empereur*," filled the bosoms of all who dreaded a repetition of the scenes they had before witnessed and survived to remember, with fear and dread.

England, backed by her allies, came forward to crush the tyrant. The result is known. Waterloo unfolds its pages, imprinted with the blood of thousands, to relate the event to ages yet unborn. The Belshazzar received the thwarted tyrant on her knees, and exhibited daily to the curious gaze of thousands the man who ought to have been buried amidst the daring veterans who should have protected his life to the last, instead of leaving the battle-field ingloriously, to lie like a common man, and being buried beneath the shade of a willow that wept for his noble end, on the sterile isle of St. Helena. The end of all was anomalous. The designs of the man who had exerted all his energies to destroy the Bourbons, root and branch, were removed by a scion of that dynasty, and deposited with regal pomp and splendour in the heart of that capital, where all the descendants of those who had been executed and exulted over the guillotined remains of his ancestors.

It was good policy ! it was a wise *coup d'état*."

CHAPTER XIII.

Amongst the hundreds who, instead of enjoying their happy homes, and cherishing all they held dear, "sought the battle-plain" again, was Eugene Akinside, then a young officer in the —th regiment. He fell, severely wounded, on the plains of Waterloo, just as, at the end of the third day, he was serving out rations to some of his soldiers. His family mourned for him as one dead. He recovered of his wounds, however, and returned home, the wreck of his former self.

A father's fostering care, a mother's constant watchfulness, restored him, under the blessing of a higher power, to health. A large family of brothers and sisters clasped the recovered soldier to their hearts. The

sonage—Eugene was a clergyman's son—
again the scene of happiness, for the loved
had been "dead and was alive again."

The present was delightful—compared with
sufferings it was heaven itself—but Eu-
e thought of the future. He fancied the
ival of that time when his father, in the
urse of nature, would be removed, and with
a their sole means of support. He knew
t he ought to be the protector and friend
his widowed mother and her orphan chil-
n; but how was he, out of the paltry pit-
ce of a half-pay captain, to support so
y? It was not to be done. Peace was
blished on too firm a basis to be speedily
ken. There was no employment for hun-
ds who were unfitted for aught but war
bloodshed. The sword was sheathed in
scabbard, in which it was fated to rust
employed.

Eugene consulted with his aged father.
s advice was that he should sell out, and,
h the price of his commission, keep his
ms at Oxford; and, when he had taken his
gree, be ordained as his curate.

This plan accorded with Eugene's feelings and wishes. He had been a fair classical scholar in his youth. A little reading up, he felt assured, would qualify him for matriculation, and he relied upon rigid attention to his college duties to insure him a respectable degree.

Eugene was very popular at College. He could entertain his friends with accounts of battles and adventures of which he had been an eye-witness and a participator. He could tell anecdotes of our greatest heroes. He showed them how they bivouacked by night in the mountains and woods of Spain, by disposing a dozen undergraduates in picturesque attitudes around an imaginary watch-fire in the centre of the quad-grassplot. Eugene, however, never allowed his popularity to interfere with his studies, or to lead him into scenes of debauchery and riot. He had an important object to attain, and resolutely resisted all temptations that might have risked his success.

At the completion of his third year of residence, he went up for his examination. He

no intention of going up for a class, but did his work so creditably, and his character was so much appreciated, that the examiners placed his name "under the line," as it is now the third class was then called : was an honourable station, and considered proof of fair scholarship.

His ordination speedily followed the taking of the degree, for the bishop was glad to add to holy orders so good a son, and to reward so good a father, who had borne the burden and heat of a long day in the service of the church, from a portion of his labours.

The pleasing task of assisting his parent was not long his to enjoy. A short, but severe attack of illness removed the latter from the family. The grave had scarcely closed on the remains before the new incumbent signified his intention of coming into residence at the expiration of the three months allowed to a widow for the purpose of providing herself another abode.

Mr. Akinside had died poor, for he had a large and expensive family, and his partners—humble labourers—often required

his assistance. He had a heart too open to the appeals of poverty to refuse his aid. He gave—gave too largely for his means—but he was blessed in giving. He had insured his life for a certain amount, which, being judiciously laid out in an annuity, produced sufficient to afford a living to the widow and her youngest children.

Eugene sought and obtained another curacy. The stipend was very small, but the house was large and convenient. There he placed his mother to superintend his housekeeping, and to save her the expense of hiring a house for herself. Private pupilizing was in vogue at that period, for some sort of prejudice had been raised against sending boys to public schools. Private pupils were more plentiful than private tutors then, though it is just the reverse now. Eugene advertised but once. His advertisement was replied to by a rich manufacturer, who wished to place two boys of eighteen and seventeen years of age with a clergyman, to be prepared for the university. He offered a liberal recompense, and Eugene agreed to the terms. He was happy at the

a of being placed in a situation to enable
to aid his mother in the education of her
younger children.

The pupils came to reside. Eugene found
that they were ill-regulated, half-taught, and
unwilling, to an extent hardly credible. He
thought about repairing the errors in their moral
culture first; and endeavoured to gain their
confidence by kindness of manner, and parti-
cipating in such of their sports as were not
inconsistent with his station.

Playing at cricket and tennis, or rowing
with their tutor, soon became distasteful to
those who had been allowed to indulge in more
dangerous and immoral occupations. They
felt that he would not countenance them in
the pursuits they delighted in; so they did
their best, by falsehood and contrivance, to
deceive him, in order to practise in private
what they dared not do openly.

They sought the race-course, the cockpit,
the public-house, kept by a retired pu-
rson, and accounted for their absence from
parsonage by stating that they had been
out on a visit. As it had been stipulated

that they should do so now and then, and their father's house was not many miles distant, their account was believed.

Their visits to the race-course and cockpit produced no visible results for a time — they betted with each other, and no one was the wiser, as they kept it secret; but the lessons they received from the boxer induced them to practise the art of self-defence in their bedroom, and to keep up their stamina by pouring strong drinks down their throats. As Mr. Quaverton would have sung,

They kept their spirits up by pouring spirits down.

The effects of these amusements soon showed themselves in a series of discoloured eyes, repeated bleedings at the nose, and violent headaches in the morning. All these appearances were accounted for by any falsehood that came uppermost in their vivid imaginations.

Mr. Akinside's suspicions were first aroused by observing a great change in the boys' manner towards each other. Instead of always being together, and whispering and laughing

each other, they began to be churlish and
ful in the remarks they made *at* each
r. They avoided each other's society as
as they could, looked black and sulky
the lectures they had formerly "got up"
ther, and at last petitioned to have sepa-
bedrooms, under the pretence of its being
holesome to sleep in a double-bedded
t.

their request was granted. Mr. Akinside
satisfied that something had occurred to
an unbrotherly feeling in the hearts of
his pupils. What it was he could not
They had had no dispute, no quarrel,
s presence, nor had his mother witnessed
thing of the kind. He questioned them
the subject. Both denied the existence of
difference of opinion, or any cause of
ity. What could he do more?

he fact was, that the younger brother,
was the taller and stronger of the two,
fairly surpassed the elder in acquiring the
nce in which Englishmen are known to
l. He could stop and hit almost as quick

and as hard as his master in the art. In his set-tos he had not only exhibited this superiority of skill, but taken advantage of it by punishing the weaker and less skilful party very severely. This had led to a quarrel. The gloves were thrown off, and a battle fought in a retired spot in the grounds, which ended in the defeat of the younger from a severe kick which he received from his brother just as he had conquered him with his fists.

The bruises received, and the lameness which resulted from this encounter, were explained away by a story which they concocted of having been run at by a wild cow, and fallen over the fence in trying to escape from her horns. The lie was so fluently told by the one, and so well backed up by the other, that it was believed.

The boys, after this memorable day, hated each other cordially, and each sought an opportunity of venting his hatred in blows. They never spoke to each other on any subject. They drank deeply, but in silence. They longed to quarrel, but each was unwilling to

in. Each wanted to have an excuse for attacking the other, but neither chose to commence the attack.

While they were in this humour, it happened that Mr. Akinside praised an exercise which his younger brother had shown up. He spoke of it with much and highly of the very superior way in which he had translated some of the passages. The elder saw that this praise gave his brother great pleasure. He resolved to mar his joy. He told Eugene that "it was easily accounted for; any boy could do it as well if he had as good a crib."

The fire of fury flashed from the eyes of the younger brother when he heard his deception exposed. He struck the table heavily with his hand, and said—

"You are a liar!"

The elder brother sneered, and avowed that he had spoken the truth.

Mr. Akinside was annoyed at this sudden outburst, and frightened at the demoniac expression in the face of his younger pupil. He was about to expostulate with them both, to rebuke them for quarrelling and using such

coarse and unwarrantable terms, when the younger one shouted out—

“Cowardly tell-tale as well as liar!—take that.”

Mr. Akinside saw a blow struck—he saw the elder brother fall from the blow. He sprung up from his seat, but, before he could get round the table, on the opposite side of which he had been sitting, the younger threw something from his hand and sprang out of the open window on to the grassplot—it was a penknife; the blade was covered with blood. Eugene trembled as he turned to look at the victim of a brother's uncontrolled fury. He was writhing in agony on the ground; his hands were pressed to his side, and from between his fingers drops of blood were trickling on to the boards.

The alarm was given, and assistance obtained as speedily as possible. The surgeon examined the wound, and pronounced it dangerous. The boy was put to bed, and, before his father and mother could return with the messenger, who had been despatched for them in a chaise, their son was a corpse.

jury was summoned. Mr. Akinside the circumstance as it occurred. The summed up, and the verdict returned ath by misadventure, as it was made to that the murderer had had the pen in his hand for some time, and struck ow without being aware of his having f the deadly weapon.

lic rumour laid all the blame of the and its consequences on the poor

e had stood calmly by, and let one r stab the other without interfering to t him. He had encouraged them to l—to fight. He had allowed them to in their rooms every night. He had d at their bringing bottles of brandy ther spirits home with them from the -house, where he permitted them to essions from the blackguard landlord in g. He had never done his duty, or the ould not have been seen at the races, etting at the cockpit.”

ese remarks were not confined to the e vulgar. The most respectable people

in the neighbourhood gave utterance to them, either because they believed them to be true, or because they believed that a man who had declined all their overtures to induce him to visit them, and kept himself closely at home, shunning society, was capable of any thing low and mean, and, of consequence, dangerous and disreputable.

In vain did Mr. Akinside explain; in vain did he plead ignorance of his pupils having frequented the scenes and places they had frequented.

“He *ought* to have known it, if he did not. A pretty fellow to have the care of youth, to let them wander just where they pleased.”

It was useless to attempt to stem the tide of unpopularity which was flowing in against him. It availed him not to refer to his own conduct in the church publicly, in his parish privately.

“He might be a pretty good parson—he was a very bad neighbour—never went out to dinner, or gave a dinner at home—and quite unfit for a tutor.”

The faces of all were set against him. His

h was deserted by all except the poor, from he had been as kind and as bountiful as his slender means would enable him to be. Even some of these feeders on his purse despised him.

His soup was nothing but sheep's-head and mutton broth, with a few vegetables in it, and a little rice. No wonder he allowed the people to stick each other. They most likely were badly fed, and quarrelled about a bit of food.

The bishop of the diocese received several anonymous letters, calling on him to remove Eugene from the parish, to suspend him from the altar, and to strip off his gown. These letters he enclosed to the accused party, and requested him to favour him with an account of what had happened. Eugene complied with the request. He wrote a plain, straightforward statement of facts, which bore upon the face of it the impress of truth. The bishop believed every word of it. He recommended him to leave the curacy, and promised a benefice as soon as a vacancy occurred in his gift.

Mr. Akinside resigned, and was "rung out" of the parish. He felt the insult, but a sense of having been treated with unjustifiable severity enabled him to bear it with patience. He forgave his enemies, for his was not the form but the substance of the religion he taught.

He retired to a small cottage with his mother, and spent his time in study and the tuition of his younger brothers and sisters. He trusted to time to clear his character, and make him compensation for the persecutions to which he had been most unjustifiably exposed.

After he had been thus hidden, as it were, from the public eye about three months, he received a letter from Lord —, stating that he had applied to the bishop, Eugene's diocesan, to recommend him a person who would reside with him as tutor to his little boy, and spend his leisure time in arranging a voluminous library, of which he had just become the purchaser. The bishop had mentioned his name, and explained the circumstances which had induced him to resign his curacy. Lord

wished to know if he would undertake duties, to which he was so admirably

. Akinside agreed to undertake them, to take a liberal salary for doing them. He was installed as librarian at —— Castle, took possession of a suite of apartments containing the library; had a horse and servant set aside for his own service and use, thought himself a very fortunate person in obtaining such a very desirable appointment. He was introduced to his pupil, and found an agreeable, gentle child, of nine years of age.

The rich manufacturer, the father of the unfortunate youth who had fallen a victim to another's fury, no sooner heard that the tutor of his sons was now tutor to a lord, he published a letter in the county paper, with the most fulsome and disgusting panegyrics upon Eugene's great attainments and high moral character. He soundly rated the parish of which he had been curate, for giving to accusations, unfounded, malicious,

and cruel, against their pastor, and ended by saying, that he had no doubt Mr. Akinside would do his duty as well towards Lord ——'s child as he had done to his, and wishing him joy in having secured a reward for his services *almost* as valuable as the one which *he* had formerly bestowed upon him.

The *animus* of this public document was too apparent to annoy Eugene very much. He despised the proud upstart, and took no farther notice of him.

With Lord ——, Eugene lived on a footing of equality. He was treated as a gentleman and a friend.

Lady —— was absent from —— Castle. She had remained in town after what is termed the season was ended, in order to allow her daughters, who were on the point of coming out, the benefit of masters. They were engaged, at enormous salaries, in putting the last polish on the accomplishments which, in these days, it was considered "no young lady ought to be without."

Lord —— never talked of her ladyship, or

pressed a wish for her presence in the case, though he often spoke of his daughters as very fine and amiable girls.

From the rector of the parish, who was a frequent guest at the table, and who had shown him every civility in his power, Eugene learned that Lady —— was proud and untidy.

He had received hints, too, that his situation in the family would not be so agreeable as her presence as it had been in her absence. His father looked down upon all engaged in dissensions, sacred or profane, and thought it *indigne* to sit down with any divine below the rank and dignity of a bishop. She treated her husband with contempt, though he had raised her to a rank far above what her birth and position in society could have led her to aspire to with any hope of success.

Towards her youngest child, Eugene's son, she had never exhibited a mother's love. Her affections had been fixed on her eldest

son. Him she had idolized, worshipped, as a superior being. Death had deprived her of him, and in his grave she had buried all her

love for her offspring; for, though proud of her daughters, and anxious to prepare them for the stations they were to fill, by insuring them all the outward and visible signs of aristocratic perfection, she had never tried to win their confidence, to learn their secret wishes and feelings by exhibiting a mother's love for them, or a mother's anxiety for their moral culture. This part — this essential part of their education — had been left to hirelings, who, to do her ladyship justice, had been selected with care and caution, and nobly remunerated for their services. She was said to be easily offended, and never known to forgive the person who had given her offence. If the offender was subject to her control, he or she was not allowed to "explain," but dismissed peremptorily, and banished from her presence for ever.

This account of her ladyship did not prejudice Eugene in her favour. He hoped that some unforeseen event might occur to prevent her coming down to the castle for some months at least. His hopes, however, were vain. Her approach was announced, and a serious gloom-

ness pervaded the hitherto cheerful countenances of the domestics; for none liked their mistress, though none dared to say that they disliked her, even to each other.

Eugene had resolved upon the plan of content best to be pursued by himself when the sole mother of his pupil arrived. It was to confine himself as much as possible to his rooms and to the library, under the plea of having all the books to arrange and examine.

The day "big with the fate of" my heroine. The carriages drove up, and swept the library windows full two hours sooner than they were expected. Eugene had left the papers in the drawing-room in which he had been consulting with Lord —— just before they went into the dining-room to the luncheon, while the little lord took his mother. He thought that there would be sufficient time to recover these papers while the carriages were discharging their freight. He passed along the passage which led to the reception-rooms, avoiding the hall and the public approaches. A side door gave

him admittance to the inner drawing-room, and he passed through into the larger room. In the centre stood an elegant but neatly-dressed female, apparently of some nineteen or twenty years of age. She had thrown aside her bonnet and some of the outer coverings of her dress, and was examining the cards which filled a porcelain basket on the centre table. On hearing the sound of a footstep, she looked up from her occupation, and exposed to Eugene's view one of the most interesting countenances he had ever beheld. It was not the beauty of mere feature or complexion. The face was pale, but the palor was relieved by eyes of deep brilliant gray, shrouded by brows and lashes of dark-brown hair, long and finely-pencilled. A profusion of hair of the same colour, only lighter by a shade or two, fell in ringlets on either cheek, and was only prevented by a bandeau from entirely shadowing the face.

Eugene had no doubt that the owner of this pleasing face was one of the daughters of Lord ——. He therefore made a very low bow, and, as he collected his papers, com-

ed an apology for his seemingly unwelcome intrusion.

fore he had finished his explanation, and lady could reply, a servant threw open door, which led from the hall, and a lady from no one could doubt to be the lady of the castle—entered, followed by two elegantly-dressed girls, and Lord ——, who held them by the hand.

Will your ladyship allow me to present my friend, Mr. Eugene Akinside, to your ladyship? He is the gentleman who has kindly undertaken the tuition of our boy, and the management of my books. Mr. Akinside, —— and my daughters.”

Eugene bowed as he wondered who Lady No. 4 was. The Earl’s daughters returned their bows. Lady —— raised her glass to her lips and said,

The tutor—I thought as much. Tarleton, will you oblige me by seeing my portfolio safely removed from the carriage, and deposited in my dressing-room?”

The Lady No. 4 made a deep curtsey and retired.

“Dear Tarleton,” said the girls, “we will go with you.”

Lady —— said, “Stay here, girls — she will see every thing properly taken care of.”

Eugene was about to withdraw, fully satisfied that he had been apologising to the governess or lady's-maid. Lord ——, however, spoke to him, and again introduced him to her ladyship as an officer who had served his country in the Peninsula and at Waterloo. The expression of the Countess's face was changed immediately. She greeted the officer, not the man. She despised him as a tutor, but as a retired soldier she deemed him worthy of her sweetest smile. A few minutes' conversation convinced her she was conversing with a gentleman, and her manner was so bland and gracious, that Eugene was fully satisfied that the stories he had heard of her hauteur and overbearing conduct were false and calumnious.

To please the mother, he thought he could not do better than to praise her son, his pupil. He spoke long and forcibly of his talents and amiability, and expressed a conviction that he

ould one day do honour to the title he was
n to bear.

The mother listened to the praises of her
ld, but her face expressed no sympathy
h the words she uttered, when she replied,
he was glad to hear that he was getting on
ll, and gave satisfaction to his instructor."

"But, oh! Mr. Akinside," she added, while
r countenance wore the flush of excitement,
d the tears rolled in big round drops from
r eyes, "had you but known his brother—
y child, my lost one—if ever an angel was
owed to exist on earth, he was one. With
n all that was glorious, great, and good,
rished. He was my hope; he was taken
m me, and I feel myself alone—childless
d alone."

Eugene would have said somewhat to con-
le the grief he witnessed, had not the Earl,
o was aware that a violent fit of hysterics
ould succeed this outbreak of sorrow, given
n a signal to leave the room, and requested
s daughters to summon Miss Tarleton and
r ladyship's maid. As he passed to the li-
ary by the same passage by which he had

entered the drawing-room, Eugene's ears were pierced by a thrilling scream, followed by wild, unnatural shouts of laughter.

At dinner, all was calm and tranquil; the storm had passed away, and left no traces of its violence.

After dinner, Lord L——, who usually took his bottle of claret with Mr. Akinside, did not allude to any thing that had transpired. As soon as the wine was finished, he proposed to join the ladies; to which proposal Eugene had no objection.

When they entered the drawing-room, Miss Tarleton was singing at the pianoforte, and the ladies Louisa and Fanny were accompanying her on the harp and with their voices. Lady —— was reclining on a sofa, wrapped in shawls, caressing a beautiful little dog that lay ensconced in the folds of her dress.

Eugene looked towards her ladyship; but, as she did not notice him, he sat down near the instruments and listened to the music. He was enchanted. He had never heard so much skill and execution displayed before. The tones of the nobly-born ladies were bril-

ant and full, but were surpassed in richness and sweetness by the voice of Miss Tarleton, which was deep and mellow. She also excelled her pupils in expression, for she seemed to feel the words which they sung merely as a vehicle for sound.

When the trio was over, Eugene sat like one entranced. The vision of delight, however, vanished from his mind when the Countess said, "Enough, Tarleton, that will do for to-night. You may retire."

The governess obeyed. Her pupils, kissing the cheek of their mother, which was coldly pressed out to them, followed their governess, after they had thrown their arms about the neck of the Earl, and bowed courteously to Mr. Akinside.

Two months elapsed. The castle was filled with visitors. Eugene confined himself much to his pupil and his books. He seldom joined the dinner-table, but always passed an hour or so in the drawing-room to listen to the music and singing. He had been thrown much into Miss Tarleton's society, as she and the ladies Louisa and Fanny always dined at an

early hour with Eugene and his pupil. They frequently rode or walked together afterwards.

In these interviews, Eugene saw enough of the governess to be satisfied that she was highly-talented, very amiable, and very unhappy. She seemed nervous to a painful degree, and was in the habit of looking frequently and timidly about her, as if she dreaded the approach of some one. The cause of this nervous fear Eugene could not divine, as she was treated with the greatest kindness by her pupils, and with civility and attention by the domestics.

The mystery, however, was cleared up.

In the centre of the flower-garden stood a beautiful temple, called the Temple of Flora, and ornamented with statues and devices suitable to the name it bore. It was the favourite resort of the young ladies and their governess, whenever the weather induced them to seek its shady coolness.

As Eugene was engaged in the garden, giving his pupil a *clinical* lecture on botany by the side of the flower-beds, he heard loud

nds of anger and rebuke uttered with rarity and violence. He stood to listen. His eye gazed upon his face, and blushed as he

—
Lady ——” (for he never called her mother) “is scolding poor Tarleton, as usual.” Without thinking of what he was doing, he walked rapidly towards the temple whence the voice evidently came. The sight that presented itself astonished him. His mother —, her countenance inflamed, her eyes flashing, and looking more like a demon than a woman, stood with her finger pointed at the governess, who was weeping silently in the arms of her pupils, who appeared to be deprecating their mother’s anger. “You, too, an orphan, friendless, and unprotected, whom I took out of compassion from a charity-school, bearing the dress and name of beggary upon you—you, whom I loved to leave your humble station, and raised to a situation far above your worth—something!—reptile!—to desert your duties, and try your seductive arts on the tutor of my son!”

"You accuse me falsely, madam," sobbed the governess.

"Mother — dear mother — you are mistaken; indeed you are," said the ladies.

"Falsely? *I*—I, the Countess of —, am to be told, by one dependant on my bounty, that I utter a falsehood! and that, too, when I have proofs of what I assert?"

"What proofs, madam?" said Eugene, who, to the surprise of all, stepped into the temple.

Lady — stepped back, drew up her tall figure to its full height, and, eyeing him with bitter scorn, said—

"Your unexpected and unwelcome presence here, if other proofs were wanting, is sufficient to show that you have been induced by that wanton there to neglect your duties, and forget your situation in this family."

Eugene was astonished. He would have demanded an explanation, but, before he could speak, Lady — seized her son by the hand, and left the temple, bidding her daughters "follow her immediately, and not to countenance, by their presence, the dis-

peaceful intercourse of two ungrateful hire-
lings."

The daughters would have disobeyed their father, and remained to comfort their falsely-accused friend; but Miss Tarleton waved them from her as she rose from their arms, and the Countess again bade them "leave, on pain of her displeasure, those who should shortly be turned out into the world, as they deserved." They reluctantly obeyed.

The situation of Miss Tarleton and Eugene was painful in the extreme. He, however, urged the poor weeping girl to a seat; and, in the most delicate way he could, inquired the meaning of what he had seen and heard. The explanation satisfied him that the Countess was a slanderer and a tyrant. He strongly urged Miss Tarleton to quit the castle immediately.

Where was she to go? She had not a friend in the world. Eugene thought of his father. He urged Miss Tarleton to put herself under his protection. She refused, for she said it would confirm the story which the Countess had invented. Eugene combated

her arguments, and at last prevailed by promising her not to visit his home while she remained under its roof. He would resign his tutorship, and would retire to London for a time.

Eugene procured a means of conveyance; and when the Countess inquired for the governess in the evening, a note was placed in her hands, which informed her that she had left the castle for ever. In anger she ordered the servant to send Mr. Akinside to her. The man told her "he had left in a post-chaise about an hour before."

Lady —— sought the Earl, who told her that, through her violent temper and unwarrantable accusations, she had driven a friendless girl to seek a home with the stranger, deprived her son of a conscientious guide, and himself of a sincere friend.

The Countess sneered at her lord contemptuously, as she said—

"It was cunningly contrived; she wished they might marry, and live happily together."

Lord —— would have vindicated the

acters of his friend and his daughters' earnestness, but the Countess bade him not attempt to deceive her, as he had been deceived himself, and left the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

Two months had passed since the scenes I have recorded were acted. Eugene Akinside had been inducted to the living of Ditchingly. Lord ——, the patron of the living, had given it to him in a way which rendered a refusal impossible. It was but of little value; but it would, as his lordship said, support him in comfort until a more valuable one became vacant.

After induction and reading in, Eugene returned to London until the vicarage-house was put into repair.

“The season” had again commenced; town was full; the streets and parks were thronged with carriages. Amidst the thousands who went to breathe the pure air of *the* park and

ensington Gardens was the sub-vicar of
itchingly. As he was about to leave and
ek his lodgings, some time after the great
ess of visiters had departed, and evening
as throwing its lengthened shadows on the
rth, he heard a loud shout, followed by
reams and shrieks. These were succeeded
a fearful trampling of horses; the ground
emed to shake under his feet. He turned
ascertain the cause of the sudden uproar,
d saw an open pony-carriage approaching
fast as the little animals could draw it. A
dy sat on the driving-seat, but the reins
d fallen from her hands and she was scream-
g for aid. A gentleman who was sitting by
er side seemed to be trying to recover the
llen reins. This Eugene saw at a glance;
e carriage came up, he sprung into the road,
ized the bridle of the off-side horse, and
urned the carriage towards the rails by the
de of the drive; the ponies sprung over,
roke the traces and the pole, and scampered
ver the greensward, leaving the carriage on
ne other side.

Eugene's arm was broken in the attempt to

stop the ponies; the agony was such that he was insensible for a time. When he recovered, a crowd was around him, and a surgeon was binding up his broken limb; the carriage lay at his side overturned; a lady was fainting on the ground near him, and by her side lay what had been Lord ——, Eugene's friend and patron. The ladies Louisa and Fanny were weeping over their dead father; he had fallen on his head and fractured his skull. The fainting lady was the Countess, who had been driving the ponies, and venting her ill-humour by lashing them into madness.

Eugene was assisted into a coach, that had been called for him, and left the spot. The fractured arm was for a long time painful, and the surgeons were in doubt whether they would not be compelled to remove it. They removed him instead of his arm, and sent him down to his mother, where Miss Tarleton still dwelt, repaying the widow's kindness to her in her destitute state by educating her younger daughters.

A few years passed by, and Ditchingly vicarage was tenanted by the incumbent and

incumbrances. Eugene had a wife and children, all living happy and contented £180 per annum. Need the reader be told that the mother of those children had the name of Tarleton?—that the Countess's wish had proved prophetic?

It was to be a great day at the parsonage to be hatched when the sixth child was to be christened. The grandmother of the child was to be there, and all its aunts and uncles; the whole family were to attend. They had; the day passed off delightfully; never had an evening sun set on a happier family. On the same sun rose again, it shone on a house of mourning; joy and mirth were changed for gloom and sorrow. The cholera—the pestilence permitted by Heaven to scourge the land—had fallen on the happy family. The scourge assumed its severest form—all human aid was vain; victim after victim fell beneath its violence: and, when the father recovered from its attack, he found all his loved ones—all—his mother, his brothers, and his children—all, save his infant—were dead and BURIED,

hidden for ever from his sight in this world. Many of his parishioners had fallen too; for the plague had swept that part of the country encouraged probably by the noisome air from the peats below.

Did Eugene Akinside sink under the blow? No: faith and hope supported him—he lived to join his loved ones in another world, to rear and train up the only legacy his wife had left him—her babe—in this.

Within one year after this sad blow was sent to try him, the Countess of——died. In her will, she left a large sum, amounting to thousands to the Incumbent of Ditching, as some compensation for the injuries she had done to him and his wife, and as a mark of her sense of his courage in attempting to save her from harm when her horses ran away.

Eugene did not want this money; he had enough, and more than enough for himself and his child. He gave it—the whole amount—anonymously, to a college for the education of orphan-girls.

Reader, these tales are told. The "Five
umbents" are still living, I believe. If
I should meet with them all, or any of
them, except the rector of Squashyfield,
whose merits I know not, and may never
know, as he is still *non est*, cultivate their
friendship, for they are worthy of your
regard.

If you are fond of angling, seek the village
of Clearstream, on the top of the Exeter
hillyer. The landlord will tell you of my
success, and point out my favourite spots;
I will not complain to you of my having
done nothing for the "good of the house"
by sponging on the neighbouring parsons;
I will tell you of the happy evening we
passed on the day before my departure, when
I entertained all my friends at an excellent
dinner, gave them plenty of wine, and pro-
mised them to visit them again on the follow-
ing year.

I have not been able to perform that pro-
mise, but my friend the Professor vows he
will accompany me to Clearstream next sea-
son to eat the trout and the fairy fish on the

spot. He is nervously anxious for the time to arrive, but I tell him, in the words of Zachariah Bond, " Easy does it—no hurry—lots of time," to which he replies with a wink, like the rector of Rushley's, and sings,

Time hath wings, old age approaches,
imitatory of my friend, Mr. Quaverton.

CHAPTER XV.

When I do get a holiday, which is not very often, I like to make a whole holiday of it. I do not like your half-holidays—work in the morning and play in the afternoon. I cannot find time, or inclination either, to do one-half of what I wish to do on these said half-holidays. They seem like days cut in two, and both ends spoilt. I cannot work in the morning thinking of how much play I can concentrate into the evening, nor play in the evening regretting how very little I accomplished in the morning. *Diem perdidit*, I am apt to say in the words of a much wiser man than myself. If I am to have a lark, I like to go the whole bird. Half a lark is but a poor meal, and only fit for one of two ap-

prentices, who are to be "*treated as one of the family.*"

I recollect when I was at school, in the suburbs of the great metropolis, confined within high and with broken-glass-defended walls, we were promised a half-holiday, if one of our *old fellows*, as we used to call those who had left school, should gain an exhibition, for which he was trying, either at Oxford or Cambridge, I forget which. The news came that he had been successful, and we claimed the fulfilment of the promise. Our claim was allowed, and a day fixed for the fruition of our *demi-vacance*.

We of the fifth and sixth forms were allowed to go out of bounds on such occasions, provided we were in gates before nine o'clock at night. The penalty for transgressing this proviso was a long imposition — task some would call it; but we thought the former word more correct, and are in the habit of using it still.

Now the subject of our debates, for two or three days previous to the half-holiday, was by what means and in what manner we should

the most of the short time that would
pass between twelve and nine o'clock.

These debates interfered sadly with con-
ferences, exercises, and repetitions; and, al-
though very strong arguments were used by
the most eloquent of our speakers, the debate
was not terminated when the day arrived; so
it came to a division, literally, at once. We
shed the hated livery of the school, and put
on our home clothes. We reached the gates
of a body, and there the division took place.
As a correct logical *medium*, we were dis-
counted.

The fishermen went off for the Seven Ponds
at Hampstead, or Hornsey Sluice House.
The fencers sought Angelo's rooms, in hopes
of seeing the life-guardsman play. Some who
were lighted in encouraging "that truly British
sport," boxing, proceeded to take lessons of
Mr. Jackson. Others, wishing to become
black shots, went to the Red House at Batter-
sea, to profit by the skill there exhibited at
the pigeon-trap. Not a few made up a boat's
crew, and rowed up to Richmond. The
poor, and those who were *minus* the *sine*

quâ non, money, went to call on their friends and relations, in hopes of a tip and an invite to dinner.

On one point we were unanimous, not to return to school without having had what was significantly but vulgarly named a good tuck-out; that is, as much as we could eat and drink, and a little more.

When our companions had left us, my friend Wilkins and I looked at each other, as much as to say, "Well, what shall *we* do?" Neither of us could answer the question; we were both undecided, and five minutes of our valuable time was already gone, wasted, thrown away.

"*Fugit irrevocabilis hora*," said Wilkins, "what *shall* we do?"

Now, we were both of us as fond of fencing, fishing, boxing, shooting, and rowing, as any of those who had started to indulge in those sports; but we were equally fond of all of them, and could not select one to be indulged in on this occasion, to the neglect of the rest.

"*I præ, sequar*," said I, "lead the way,

will follow. *Fortuna favet fortibus*, something will turn up."

Forty boys," growled Wilkins, "she may, not *two* who have not courage enough to put out a half-holiday."

Cease your punning," said I, "and come along. Let us go to Lords' Cricket Ground, and see a match."

Capital," said Wilkins. "Come along. Wonder Jack Tufthunter did not think of this, for he is always talking about Lords."

It so happened that St. John's Wood was at the other extremity of London, and neither of us had the least notion of its whereabouts, or of the miles to be passed before we reached it. We inquired our way, and walked leisurely along, fancying that an hour would bring us to the spot. When we got to the Holborn end of Oxford Street, we renewed our inquiries as to the way, and were told that, "if we went about a mile straight on, and then turned up Portland Place into the New Road, and went on that about a mile and a half towards

Paddington, and asked the people there that they would direct us the other two miles."

We stood aghast. Wilkins looked at his watch. One hour and a half of our half-holiday were gone. It was foolish to turn back now we were half-way, so we set out at a sort of half-trot. Neither of us suggested a jarvey; (and omnibuses were then unknown) for we meant to save all our money for the *tuck*.

Just as Paddington Church clock struck three, we arrived at the entrance of the ground.

"Now," said Wilkins; "now to see what cricket really is."

"No play to-day, gentlemen; rolling the ground for the great match to-morrow," said the gatekeeper.

"Bowled out," said I.

"Regularly stumped," shouted Wilkins; "but let us take to our stumps again, or we shall waste the half-holiday."

"But where shall we go? What shall we do?" I inquired.

Wilkins shook his head negatively, but as his shake was over, the loud tones of Paul's great bell came booming over London.

"I say, did you ever go to the top of Paul's or the Monument?" asked my friend.

"Never," said I.

"Let us go now then—we shall be able to boast of having been a cut above the other fellows."

We galloped back into the New Road, and hired a Paddington stage to the top of Goswell Street, and in a state of perspiration and fatigue arrived at the northern gate of the cathedral just as its bell tolled four o'clock. Service had commenced, and the church could not be shown.

"Never mind," said Wilkins, "let us go to the Monument—it's a half-holiday—so we shall only go half as high as we intended."

A few minutes sharp walking brought us to the Monument. The keeper, who was feeding a smoke-dried canary at the entrance, in

reply to our request to be "shown up," said, between his chirpings to the bird,

"'Tain't in no ways allowable to permit no more suicides *here*—if you're tired of life, try Lunnun Bridge. *We're* shut up."

He deigned to inform us, after sundry winks and grimaces, that a person had, a few days before, destroyed himself by springing over the rails, and that the city authorities had ordered the Monument to be closed to prevent a repetition of the horrid deed.

What was to be done?—we did not know. Wilkins had just informed me that it was half-past four by his watch, as a cad cried out, "Woolwich! Greenwich! Going down?"

"Did you ever see Woolwich Arsenal or Greenwich Hospital?"

"Never," said I. "Let us set off at once, here is a Woolwich coach—we will see the Arsenal first, and take the Hospital in our way back."

"But the *tuck*, you know; how much?" said Wilkins.

On being told it was only one shilling each, we did not hesitate, but mounted the roof,

as the coaches ran opposition even in those distant days, we galloped down in about an hour and a half. In fact, it was exactly six o'clock when we reached the gates of the Arsenal, for we saw the workmen come out, and the place closed for the night!

"Boat, your honours!—skulls or oars?"

"Oars," said I. "In with you, Wilkins; dip, and *we* will pull."

"But the *tuck*," began Wilkins, who was a great feeder. "How much to Greenwich?"

"Sixpence each," said the waterman.

We embarked—to use a grand phrase for getting into a wherry—and pulled away most manfully. We did not make so much way as we expected we should, seeing we were really good pullers; and just as we heard a clock somewhere on shore strike seven, I told the waterman as much. My surprise was over when I found that we had been pulling against the tide and a strong head-wind. In half an hour more we landed at the Hospital stairs, and were told that we could not see the interior at that late hour, but might spend half an

hour in the Park before the gates closed. This we did, and enjoyed it very much, until the Observatory clock struck eight, and warned us that we had no time to lose.

As we ran towards the gate, through which we escaped just in time, we agreed to go back by the stage, have our tuck in London, and get into school in good time. Our plans, however, were defeated. The last coach had just started. We set out at the top of our speed to overtake it, and probably might have done so had not Wilkins, in turning a corner, upset a potboy who was carrying out the supper beer to the streets in the neighbourhood. Wilkins, the potboy, and at least ten pewter-pots and their contents were rolling in the gutter together.

Of course a crowd collected round us, and, more of course, they all took the potboy's part against the two young gentlemen. The landlord ended the harangue that we were making to the crowd by dragging us both by our coat-collars into his bar, and demanding payment for ten pots of porter, and something for the boy's bruises.

We offered to give our addresses and to try another day; but it was of no use. We must pay at once, or be shut up all night. The latter was an alternative to which we *could not* submit. We mustered all our money, which was sixpence short of the demand, for we had but five shillings each when we started. The landlord, however, took five shillings for the porter, and gave the boy the remaining two shillings; at least, he put it into the till, and told him he would keep it for him. The crowd laughed, but whether at us or the potboy, I could not make out.

Half-past eight, and we were seven miles from home, without a penny in our pockets; we were very hungry too, for we had eaten nothing since twelve o'clock, and very tired, for we had walked and rowed a great many miles. We were sure to be too late, and get in imposition, as I told poor Wilkins, who was wet and cold from his roll in the gutter. To my surprise, he burst out into a loud laugh, and said,

“Capital excuse—I’ve hit it. I’ll get you

off. When old Quizby asks us why we stopped out after gates, we will tell him we could not help it, as we were *called to the bar.*"

I confess I was in a rage at so bad a pun, and at such a moment. I kicked him very hard, and started off towards London. He followed, and we got on very well until we made a wrong turning somewhere or other, and got completely lost in such a locality as I had no idea existed so near London ; it was more like the dirtiest parts of Bristol. After wandering about for some time, a man agreed to show us the way to London Bridge. We thought him a goodnatured fellow, and thanked him when we got to the end of Tooley Street.

"Thank ye, indeed !—is that all you mean to pay me with for coming so far?"

We confessed our poverty with many regrets, and turned to leave him, saying, "Good-night."

"Good-night," said he, as he snatched our nice new beaver hats off our heads, and vanished.

It was of no use to follow or cry stop thief, we tied our handkerchiefs over our heads, and ran on until we were fairly exhausted. We leant against a shop-window, a clock struck eleven. A watchman came up, and after trying to see our features by the aid of a oil-lamp and the candle of his horn-lantern, took us up for being without hats, and carried us before the night-constable.

We told our story — or rather I did, for Mr Wilkins was fairly beaten by “circumstances over which he had no control.” I was so much amused when all our misfortunes came before my mind’s eye, that I believe I threw a great deal of fun into my narrative, which pleased my hearers so much, that they drained me a draught out of the measure which stood on the table. I was dying with thirst; but, before I put the pewter to my lips, I reminded the constable that I had no money.

“Young gentleman,” said he — “I am *sure* you’re a gentleman — drink.”

So I did — I finished the porter, to Wilkins’s

great disgust, who grumbled out his last bad pun for the night.

“You are better off than I am; for, though you have got no *tin*, you’ve had the *pewter*.”

“Young gentlemen,” said the constable, “you are too late to get into school to-night. I believe your story to be true. You shall have a supper, and sleep here before the fire till the morning. To-morrow I will go with you to your master, and explain the reason of your being out all night. You can then repay me what I spend for you — if you are able to do so—if not, it don’t much matter.”

We accepted the kind offer, and made a most excellent meal on cold boiled beef and porter. We slept soundly on a bench, and early in the morning reached school. The master believed our tale, rewarded the constable handsomely for his kindness, and forgave us because we had lost our half-holiday.

I need hardly say that we were laughed at by our companions; but that we did not mind; we had seen a great deal more than

they had, and gained, as we thought, some valuable knowledge of the world.

Now, although this happened many years since, and the adage goes that "experience makes even fools wise," I cannot say that I have benefited by the lesson which my adventures on that half-holiday ought to have taught me. If I have a leisure day, I have many ways in which I wish to employ it, that I vacillate between this way and that way, until the day is too far spent to adopt either.

If I am in London for a week, I make up my mind to see every body and every thing worth seeing, and to lay in a stock of all sorts of necessaries and luxuries difficult to be procured in the country. What is the result? I call on a friend on Monday morning, and allow him to chalk out the week for me, to the neglect of other friends. I find myself visiting white-bait with him at Lovegrove's, or fishing on the sea at Broadstairs, when I ought to be dining off a quiet chop with some old friend at the west-end. On Saturday, as I get to the train, I find I have seen nothing that

I meant to see, and bought nothing that I ought to have bought, except a basket of fish for my worthy and excellent squire—but then I *dine with him*, and am nearly related to the Otter family, if I may judge by my fondness for fish.

The same vacillation occurs if I have a week to spare for a country trip. I look at the weathercock, and fancy N. says “go down to North Wales, to Llangerniow, and see your old friend Jones;” but S. whispers softly, “try Sussex, and see Smith.” W. puts Devon or Dorset into my head, and E. rudely hints, “you promised to go into Essex.” What am I to do? I cannot oblige them all, and the chances are that I go nowhere, but waste the week at home in forming plans for the next holiday that may offer.

About two years ago I found myself in this dilemma. I had plenty of invitations, but knew not which to accept. “Do as we do, pa, when we quarrel about who is to be *fox*,” said my eldest son—“cast lots for it.”

I took his advice. I wrote the names of my inviters on little bits of card, shook them

up in a hat, and extracted one of them. I found written thereon Jonathan Sternpost, Esq., Mount Whistling, Somerset, and on my road to his residence I found myself in less than one hour after fate or fortune had put an end to my vacillation.

CHAPTER XVI.

Jonathan Sternpost and I had been very intimate in our earlier days. Our acquaintance commenced at school by fighting one of the severest battles in which two boys were ever engaged. We fought until we could neither of us fight any longer, so we put off the deciding of the battle until the next day but without any satisfactory result. Neither of us would give in. On the third and last day of our engagement I received an unfortunate blow just under my left ear, which deprived me of all sensation, and I could not "come to time." Sternpost was declared conqueror and put to bed, where he was laid up for a week, while I, having recovered what little sense I was possessed of, was playing

at the school-grounds in less than ten minutes after my knock down. We were not friends ever after, for each was afraid to offend the other.

During our college career, we lost sight of each other, except for a few weeks in the summer vacation, for he went to Cambridge, I to Oxford. After we had taken our degrees, we were as thick as ever, and, as he used to call it, "did a bit of continent" together—that is, we went to France, Belgium, and Germany, in 1815, soon after the peace was established. He had often spent a few weeks with him at my aunt Whistling in our schoolboy days; but my professional duties had prevented my visiting him since he became whole and sole proprietor and lord of that lovely and extensive manor. On his annual visit to me, I had proposed to go down and see him "in return" for the years; and I was really glad when, by my aunt's decision, I found myself on the road to his house.

Many years had elapsed since I had travelled that road, and every thing was as new to me as if I had never seen it before. The day,

too, on which I travelled was one of those splendid days which sometimes kindly visit our island in the month of October. The leaves were just resuming their autumnal tint, casting off their greenness, as if they jollily cried out "motley's your only wear," before they, in their old age, fell into "the sere and yellow leaf," and were "done *brown*" ere they toppled from their parent boughs. The sun shone in cloudless splendour, the harvest was all gathered in, and the rustics were busily engaged in housing the product of their orchards. The frequent bang, bang! from stubble, turnip-field, and covert, showed that the sportsman was not idle.

I was full of spirits, for I had *earned* my holiday, and was going to visit an old and valued friend. I talked with every body, laughed at every thing that was said, for nothing dull could be said on so bright a day, and found myself whistling a second to every little bird that warbled forth his thanks to the glad sun for shining on him with so bright a beam.

There *was*, too, something to me very ex-

ting in rattling along a macadamized in a well-appointed four-horse coach. hat is over—past—gone. Railroads—his is a melancholy subject, so I will it. *Pace* is every thing now, and yet ed to be told that “it was the *pace* that ;” but that was only the horses, I se.

What time can it be done in?” is the question now asked. So it is that we railroad treaties of peace—bang goes a n, down goes the enemy’s flag. “Five , two islands, four millions ready y? Yes.” Peace is ratified.

urtships, too, are now done by steam. Allow me to introduce Mr. Pippin to Crabb.”

How do you do? Single, eh? Have

l is settled. The next morning Miss is ingrafted on Mr. Pippin. But I am ssing.

ell, when I arrived at the corner of the where I was to quit the coach, my friend me in his carriage. His eyes beamed

with pleasure when he saw me, and his jovial face shone as resplendently as if it had challenged the setting sun to show tints with it. After a prolonged shaking of hands, and due inquiries after each other's families, we sent the carriage on, and resolved to

Climb the hill together,

as we had done in our boyhood. We were but little changed, for we were both in manhood's prime; but the place was greatly changed, and, strange to say, improved by the change, which I had deemed impossible, so lovely had I thought it before. By judiciously cutting down there, and planting here—opening a prospect in one place, and shutting out some less deserving object in another—pulling down a cottage on this side of the road, and building a new one on that, Jonathan had indeed shown that in what I had pronounced perfection there was something more perfect. I could have stood for hours gazing about me had not my wish to gaze been checked by a hint that the John Dory would be over-done if I tarried much longer.

I hurried on, and, passing through a plan-

ion of noble beech-trees, filled with pheasants as tame as barn-door fowls—for a gun was never permitted to be fired at or near to him—I came within view of the house. I was amazed, and thought I had taken a long turn and was going to the wrong house. Was this the long, the straight-tinted, dull-looking, old English mansion I had been used to visit? No. It was a handsome building in the Elizabethan style, looking like a place of other days, cheerful, bright, and sunny. What had been a wilderness of shrubs, which shut out the view alike *of* the house and *from* the house, was gone, and in its place a neatly-mown lawn, sprinkled here and there with roses and evergreens, adorning and not obtruding the prospect.

“How do you like the alteration?” said the postman. “I wrote to you all about it. Does the reality come up to my description?”

I blushed and stammered out something, but I then recollected that he had, as I thought, bored me to death by detailing, in

every letter he wrote to me, the trouble to which he was put in getting Memel timber, ashler, model chimney-pots, gable-ends, Gothic spoutings, and all sorts of requisites necessary for turning an ugly old building into something fit to be looked at and inhabited. I had been used to throw the uninteresting twaddle into the fire, and all my recollections of his alterations and improvements departed with the flames that consumed the description of them.

He of course went off on his favourite topic, and ere he had got out of the cellars to the basement story in his story, I was obliged to hint at the possible annihilation of the John Dory, if such explanations were not deferred until the following morning.

“My dear fellow—I—only just let me....”

“No,” said I, “not now—to-morrow or next day—for I am going to stay a week, and there is an angel with two little cherubs at her side, who *must* be Mrs. Sternpost (I almost repented of calling any body with so odd a name as Sternpost an angel—it

ended so oddly), so come and introduce
e."

My hint was taken, and in a few seconds
y hand was also taken and shaken heartily
an exceedingly pretty, lady-like person, to
om I was introduced as the wife of my
end. She really shook me by the hand as
she meant to say, "My husband's friend is
elcome." It was not a mere extended fin-
er and a dropping courtesy she gave me,
ich might imply, "what a bore!—an old
choolfellow—but I must be civil—he won't
ay long," but a real friendly stop-as-long-
you-like shake. Had it not been, I should
ve taken up my beaver and departed, for
ere is nothing in this short life which I
ld in such utter detestation as an uncordial
elcome, and a half-shake of the hand. The
tended finger of pretended friendship is
uch more loathsome to me than the extended
nger of scorn. The latter you can throw
om you as a noisome, venomous reptile; the
rmer you must take, though your blood
rdles at the touch. Faugh! I think I feel
now.

The dinner was excellently cooked; the Dory, or *doré*, if my reader is fastidious, was in high perfection; nor did it eat the leg so deliciously that the parson of the parish, the only guest save my unworthy self, partook of it. A leg of mutton followed, and was displaced by a couple of fat and well-kept wild ducks.

"The dinner was plain enough," says the gourmand will say, and justly, but my friend Jonathan knew my taste, bad as that taste may be, and kindly gratified it. I am not particular in my solids, so that they be the best of their kind, and well served. In fluids I own I am somewhat choice, and though I absorb but little, that little must be of the choicest kind. Jonathan's champagne, burgundy, and pure Lafitte, were unobjectionable, and the little tankard of Campbell's town toddy that finished the evening was just strong enough to ensure good digestion by tempering the coolness of the claret without heating the system, or spoiling the matutinal meal.

On the following morning I rose with the

, and ran through the plantations to the bottom of the hill. There flowed a bright, clear stream, bounding and leaping over its rocky bed at every turn, as if in haste to take its waters with the waves of the mighty ocean. I plunged in, had a delightful swim, and regained the house just as my friend, who had been round his farm—for he was his own landlord—was sitting down to breakfast with his family.

The meal over, the letter-bag inspected, the newspaper skimmed over to get the sum of the news, I told Sternpost I was glad to be victimized and dragged through my room in the house to see all his alterations, and to visit every new farm-building, bridge, and plantation on the estate. He smiled with delight, and then put on that very important and peculiar look which every man, who is his own architect, thinks it necessary to put on when he is about to set out the results of his wonderful talents in transmuting uncomfortables into comforts—inconveniences into conveniences.

I will not weary my readers by describing

to them all I saw in the house and about grounds in a five-hours' ramble, but begged them to accompany me to the top of the hill behind the mansion through a grove of magnificent beech-trees.

The sun was shining brightly, and the cool shade afforded by the trees was so agreeable after our ramble over stubbles and fallow fields, that we sauntered along rather than walked. My friend led the way, and talked of olden times, of "the days when we were young," until he made me forget that I was toiling up a high hill to see a fine view. When, however, we gained the summit, I left the covert for an extensive terrace of greensward, such a prospect burst upon my view that I ceased to listen that I might gaze.

Below us, at the base of the hill, flowed the Severn, hastening on its course into the Bristol channel. To the right lay the city of Gloucester, with the towers of its fine cathedral and the noble canal, by means of which large and well-loaded merchant vessels reach its wharfs. Across the Severn we could

the romantic little town of Chepstow, and the ruins of its ancient castle; the rapid, turbulent Wye, hurrying into the Severn below the lofty rocks of the Windcliff. Beyond lay the river mouth, and in the background of the glorious picture were the Welsh mountains, covered with early snow, and amongst which the Sugar-loaf stood conspicuous. The filling-in of this outline of so glorious a picture I must leave to the imagination of my readers.

"How is it," I inquired, "that I have no recollection of having seen this beautiful view on my previous visits to Mount Whistling?"

"It was not then to be seen," replied Sternst. "What is now a turf-covered terrace is a part of the wood which we have just cleared. By cutting down some half-hundred beeches, and clearing away the underwood of hazels and maples which grew in this spot more luxuriantly than elsewhere, I have succeeded in gaining a prospect of that which was before shut out from the view of man, unless he was willing to do what I had often done, climb to the top of the tallest beech that stood here."

"It must have grieved you," I continued, "to lay the axe to the root of the fine old trees that stood here for ages."

"It did grieve me deeply," said Sternpost, "for I love an old tree as much as I love an old church. But I do not regret the removal of those that stood here, now that I have gained this lovely view in exchange for them. Here we pass much of our time in the summer months; and if you will walk along the terrace, I will show you our summer dining room."

I followed him for about a hundred yards and found just within the covert, but commanding the entire prospect, a rustic arbour. It was built of the rugged and bark-covered branches of the oak, lined with mosses of varied hues, and roofed with reeds. Its shape was octagonal, and on seven of its sides were benches of polished pollard oak surrounding a table, the top of which was curiously inlaid with specimens of every description of wood which grew on the estate.

"This," said my friend, "is my summer

ing-room, and behind it, but quite out of sight, is my kitchen and my cellar. Here I have had many happy parties, for none but *friends* are invited here—my *acquaintances* are below at the house. The table, as you see, will accommodate but seven; and, from its shape, prevents that going off in couples, which spoils a general conversation.”

He touched a bell as he concluded, and in a few seconds his butler appeared, bearing a tray covered with the requisites for a luncheon.

I was so much surprised—the whole affair seemed so much like the effect of magic—that I could hardly believe the viands before me to be real. I expected to see them vanish again as I had seen many a splendid entertainment on the stage vanish from the hungry eyes of the clown and pantaloon at the magic touch of the wand of harlequin. I, however, ate a real sandwich and drink a glass of real Rudesheimer as I sat enjoying the prospect before us.

We had not sat long before the sound of a bell reached us. Its tones were not loud,

but deep and melodious, consonant with the scene around us. I looked inquiringly at my friend.

"That bell," said he, "reminds me that I have yet something to show you which I think will please you even more than this view and its adjuncts. So, if you have refreshed your body, let us proceed a little further, and I will supply you with a little food for the mind."

We went to the end of the terrace, and turning a little to the right through a part of the same wood in which the harbour stood, came out upon a sort of wild common. The upper part of it was thickly planted with fine trees of every species, and many kinds of evergreens. In the midst of these stood one of the neatest Gothic buildings I have ever seen. It formed three sides of a square. In the centre was a house rather higher than the surrounding buildings, and on one side of it was a chapel, from the lantern of which the bell we had heard in the harbour was still booming over the woods. On the other was a hall. The two sides of the square consisted

six small cottages—three on either side. The space between them was laid out in flower-gardens, well stocked, and kept with exceeding care. Two small lodges stood one on each side of the entrance gateway, over which was inscribed, in the old black-letter character,

The Widows' Almshouse.

Just as we reached this gateway, the bell ceased to toll; and from each of the cottages came forth an elderly lady, dressed in a dark-grey silk gown, and wearing a black veil. We passed along the centre path towards the chapel. As I stood gazing on them and wondering what the vision meant, my friend laid his hand upon my arm, and drew me from the gate.

"We must not intrude upon them now," said he, "for they are going to afternoon prayers. The chaplain is already waiting for them, as the bell ceases to toll when he enters his desk."

"But what building is it?" I inquired; and who are those very respectable-looking old ladies who inhabit it?"

“The building is, as you saw, the Widows’ Almshouse, and the ladies are the widows; but you must be contented with this information for the present; repress your curiosity for a while. After dinner we shall be alone, and you shall hear all the particulars you are evidently anxious to learn. To-morrow you shall see the interior of the building, and be introduced to the widows. I must now go and look after my fruit-gatherers, and ride round the farm. You can accompany me or not, as you please.”

Of course I did accompany him, as I like farming, and wished to while away the time until the dinner-hour arrived, when my curiosity was to be gratified.

END OF VOL. I.

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PARSONS AND WIDOWS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

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PARSONS AND WIDOWS.

CHAPTER XVII.

My father, old Admiral Sternpost, as he always called even when a young man, commenced my friend, after his lady had retired, and a cool bottle of Lafitte had been placed on the table) was so constantly at home that he thought my mother required a companion besides my little self, her only child. He accordingly looked about the world for some one who would drive away the melancholy, which he fondly thought she must feel during his absences afloat, by conversational powers, cheerful and pleasing

manners, and — what he valued very highly — musical abilities.

An advertisement in a London paper produced a host of applicants, of all ages, sizes, and colours; for not one of the candidates forgot to describe the colour of her complexion, eyes, and hair; though upon the subject of their ages they left, as he said, wide berth for conjecture. Amongst the rest was one from a lady, who described herself as the widow of an officer of rank, who had died young in the service of his country, and left her to the tender mercies of the world without a shilling to purchase one of them.

There was something in the plain straightforward wording of this letter which pleased my father. He threw all the rest into the fire, got into his carriage with my mother, and was driven to the address, a village about four miles on the other side of Bristol. Ten minutes talk ensued, after he reached the house pointed out in the advertisement, and Mrs. Wrightly — such was the lady's name — was seated in the carriage, and on her road to Mount Whistling. Her luggage

ge, though not very bulky, was left to be
warded by the first waggon.

I was a mere boy at the time. I was, in
t, only eight years of age; yet I can re-
lect very well when my parents returned
m a journey from which I thought I was
y improperly excluded, bringing with them
tall, pale lady, dressed in mourning. I
remember my father's putting my little red
t into her slender hand, and telling me that
I did not love her, and behave well to her
while he was away, I should have a taste of
e cat as soon as he came ashore again.

I looked hard at her, as he introduced me in
s odd fashion, and saw, from the kindly
ance she threw upon me, from the sweet smile
ich beamed from her sorrowful-looking blue
es, and felt, from the slight pressure of her
er fingers, that I should love her and
scape the cat.

I was not deceived in my anticipations,
ung as I was. She was a most amiable
rson; and, next to my dear mother, I loved
er better than any one in the world. Yet
e did not spoil me; on the contrary, she

saved me from being spoiled by furnishing me with occupation for every hour in the day, which, after all, is the real way of keeping children out of mischief, and making them happy. She would write with me, draw with me, play to me and with me. She could make old toys seem new ones ; and, after our lessons were over, shared in a game of romps, although she loved romping as much as I did.

My mother, too, who had been always nervous, low-spirited, and irritable, while my father was away, and was constantly talking of battles in which her husband was to be killed or horribly mutilated, became an altered person, under the kindly influence of her friend, as she truly called Mrs. Wrightly.

On my father's return from sea, both my mother and myself gave so glowing a description of the merits and excellencies of the widow, that in the fulness of heart he seized her round the waist, and imprinted a loud smack on her pale lips, which made her feel rather uncomfortable, and my mother the least in the world jealous. He blushed, however, and apologized ; and, to hide his blushes

ossed me about in his arms, until I had well-nigh been capsized, as he said, and laid on my beam-ends. Then—I never saw him look so foolish in my life — he talked as rapidly as he could, while he drew out his pocket-book, and, crumpling up a bank-note for one hundred pounds, placed it in the widow's hands, and begged her to lay it out in any way she thought best. It was hardly possible to make out what he meant to say, but I am sure I heard him suggest clean canvass and new rigging.

Mrs. Wrightly, however, positively declined accepting the note. She was, she said, amply remunerated for all her services by the comforts of a home, and the attentions of so kind a friend as my mother, and by my endearments. She was, moreover, amply provided with funds for all her wants by the pension which my father, through his interest with the powers that were then, had procured for her.

The Admiral smoothed the note on his palm, made one more effort, in dumb show, to induce her to accept it; and when he saw that the effort was useless, thrust it into his pocket,

rubbed his eyes with the point of his little finger, and left the room, whistling some sea-going ballad very much out of tune. My mother was fidgeting about, and using her pocket-handkerchief. I thought she was crying. I am sure Mrs. Wrightly was; so I had nothing to do but to cry too, and a very happy cry we had; and, when it was over, we laughed and shook hands, and cried again, yet we were very happy.

Well, my father's duty called him away again. He left us a hale and hearty man. How did he return? A poor, sickly invalid, deprived of his right arm, and severely wounded in the right side. A splinter had struck him in the heat of an action. He refused to go below until the battle was over, although his arm hung useless beside him, and his side was sending forth streams of blood, which lay in pools on the deck where he stood. Amputation was resorted to immediately, and his life was saved; but the shock to the system was so great, that the surgeon told his sorrowing crew that he would never be fit to lead them into battle again.

For eighteen long tedious months did he lie on the couch of sickness, ere his hardy frame and iron constitution yielded to the attacks of death. During all those months, and long after my mother's strength failed her, the widow tended him with a sister's care. She supplied to me a mother's place, when my mother's grief and ill-health forbade her exerting herself. On her was left the eighty cares of the household ; and she bore the weight nobly, discharged the duties well. Every body loved her, and she deserved their love.

You remember seeing her here shortly after my coming to college, and not many months after my father's death. You must remember her, for hers was a face not easily forgotten.

I recollected her well, and told my friend . . . He seemed pleased at the fact of my remembering his second mother, and went on thus :—

I recollect the night of my father's death, as well as if it occurred but yesterday. I was at home for the holidays ; indeed, you

may recollect that I was absent from school nearly a whole quarter. I had retired to lie down for a few hours, for I had been sitting up to relieve the widow and the hired nurse, who were wearied out by want of sleep. I had scarcely laid myself down, and fallen into a feverish doze, when I was summoned to the sick room. A sudden change had come over the invalid. He had discharged much blood from the lungs, and was greatly exhausted. As soon as I reached his bedside, he made signs to me, for he could not speak, and the blood was still oozing from his lips, to open a drawer of the table which stood in the middle of the room.

I did so, and found at the top of a mass of papers one folded up as a letter, and directed to Mrs. Wrightly. I took it to my father. He smiled to see that I had interpreted his meaning; and, beckoning to the widow, placed the paper in her hand. He then joined her hand to my mother's, kissed them both, and, giving me a slight pressure of the hand which was disengaged, expired with a gentle sigh.

.

I lost a kind father, and the country a faithful and a zealous servant.

After his remains had been consigned to the vault where his ancestors for many generations had been placed before him, I felt a little curiosity to learn the contents of the letter which had been given to Mrs. Wrightly, just before his falling asleep in death. I mentioned my wish to my mother, but she was much grieved to sympathize with me on such subject. I had made up my mind to request the widow to show me the letter, when she anticipated me by placing it in my hands. I knew that my father was wealthy, and all these estates were valuable and unnumbered, but I was not aware that he was so rich as he was. He had served early and constantly, and had shared many valuable prizes. His habits, though free and generous in the extreme, were not extravagant, consequently, his money placed out to interest by his investments had accumulated greatly. I was not surprised to find, when I ascertained these facts from the solicitor who had been sent for a few days before his death, that he had in

the letter which I had delivered to him from the table-drawer, assigned over to his kind nurse the sum of £20,000 in the four per cents.

I congratulated her very sincerely on being placed, by her own deserts, in independent circumstances. I shall not readily forget her answer. The tears streamed from her eyes, as she sobbed out :—

“I accept my kind benefactor’s gift, but not from mercenary motives, as you will one day know. I have suffered in my poverty and widowhood more than you can imagine. I shall employ these means which your father’s bounty has bestowed upon me in alleviating, as far as they will go towards it, the griefs of others who may be situated as I was once. I have one favour to ask of you, my friend and pupil.”

“It is granted,” I replied.

“It is that you will give me an acre or two of land on the common above the beech grove. I wish to build an asylum there for poor widows.”

I did as she wished. The almshouse is

built, as you saw this morning, and six hearts are made happy and joyful through the bounty of a sister sufferer.

“It is very odd,” said I, “that in all your letters you never mentioned the name of Mrs. Wrightly when you wrote to me, or talked of her while you were with me.”

“You have surely heard me speak loudly in the praise of a Mrs. Lauderley? — she *was* Mrs. Wrightly. She is now the wife of the chaplain of the almshouse. To-morrow you shall visit them. I should have invited them here to-day, but I wished to make you acquainted with their histories before I introduced you to them. We must now find our way to the drawing-room, and to-morrow morning you shall, if you are not tired of the subject, know more of my friends ere you visit them and their little society, which, I assure you, is any thing but a gloomy one.”

I could only say that I should be most happy to listen to his promised histories.

CHAPTER XVIII.

How different was the morning when I awoke in the hospitable manor-house of Mount Whistling to the glorious, brilliant evening which preceded it! Like the rapidly-shifted scenes of the drama of human life, gloom had succeeded to brightness, even as gladness is exchanged for sorrow.

My friend, Jonathan Sternpost, rapped at my bedroom-door just as the clock in the stable-tower struck five. It is his usual hour of rising, as long as the sun leaves his couch early enough to enable him to discern external objects. When Phœbus is lazy and lies in bed late, my friend wisely indulges in a prolonged snooze. I partially dressed myself, and admitted him.

"I call you," said he, "as I promised to; but you had better take 'a little more sleep and a little more slumber,' as we used to say in our boyhood, for the sky 'heavily with clouds brings on the day.' A mist is on the hill, which, like the far-famed Scotch mists, will wet you as an Englishman through, if you venture to expose yourself to its penetrating influence."

"But you," said I, "you are about to face it, why should not I?"

"You know the adage, 'use is second nature;' I am like a well-thatched wheat-rick, give you an agricultural simile, and no wet will hurt me," said Sternpost; "besides, I have on an old suit, suitable to the occasion, and doff it when I return from setting the men to work."

I fancied Sternpost thought me a milksop of a character I always abominated — and I was determined to show him that he was mistaken. I pretended to lie down again; but, as soon as he had closed my door, I rose and went on my flannel-dress, without which I never

travel in summer or winter. I ought to call it, as it is, my blanket-dress, for both the tunic and lower garments are made out of the best and thickest Witney I can procure. It is donned and doffed in a few seconds, resists the cold, and is a preventive of the ill effects of checked perspiration. In this costume I left the house, and, in spite of the mist, which was saving that it wanted the rhubarb-coloured tint, and the sulphuretted-hydrogen smell, was very like a London fog. You could scarcely see objects at a few yards' distance; the trees were heavily laden with it, and at every slight rustling of the breeze shook it off from the over-burdened branches, as a poodle does the superfluous fluid he has brought with him from his bath in pool or river. The grass on the lawn over which I was crossing was, like a patent mohair gambroon, impervious to water, if I may judge by the quantity which remained on its surface, and rendered my slippers in a few seconds as limp and adhesive as a wet bit of bladder.

I felt chilly, and half inclined to turn back

at, summoning up my resolution, I strode through the plashy turf, and when I reached the hard road, set off at a good round pace for the bathing-place in the brook, threw off my dress, had a delicious swim, and trotted home again to exchange my dripping garments for a dry suit.

Oh, the delicious glow that seemed to rush through every vein and nerve after the exchange! I felt as if I loved all mankind, so cheered were my spirits; my muscles seemed to be braced so tightly, that I was sure I could clear a five-barred gate with any Nimrod in the county, and win the belt from the champion of all England by administering a series of knock-down blows *à la ribb*.

It is really astonishing to me, that so many of my countrymen shun the luxury of a bath as cautiously as they would do, were they manufactured of loaf-sugar, or any other so-ber article. They never cleanse the surface of their bodies, excepting the epidermis of their hands and face, and then wonder that

they suffer from indigestion, irritability of the nervous system, and other ills that flesh is heir to, when the pores of the body are clogged, and unable to perform their functions properly. Truly, we are a filthy nation in this respect.

Some writer, I forget who he was, and it does not much matter, said, with more truth than elegance, that the great distinction between the Englishman and the Frenchman was, that the former had a clean shirt and an unclean skin, while the latter had a clean skin and a foul shirt. The saying is but too true. We write in our earliest copybooks that "cleanliness is a virtue," acknowledge the truth of the assertion, but never practise the virtue.

Some may try to excuse themselves by pleading the difficulty of obtaining a bath in populous cities, without the risk of being taken up by a policeman; but so long as a foot-pan, a jug of water, and a real Smyrna sponge are to be obtained, the plea is a shocking bad one.

All this was unpremeditated, reader, and drew out of the occasion." I could be still so eloquent on the subject, but I will restrain the flow of words and go on with my story.

After the business of the toilet over, I sought the billiard-room, uncovered the table, and was beating myself in the third game, by knocking a cannon off the red for my imaginary adversary, when the breakfast-bell rang, and reminded me that I was very hungry indeed. I had had my *cue*, and "went to the scene" of the billiard-room, exchanging it for "a pair of chamber flats."

I do not mean to insinuate that my host and hostess were a *pair of flats*, but that I exchanged one scene for another, the back of a chair, on the stage, is called a pair of flats.

It has often struck me as a funny thing enough, that all sorts of witticisms and satirical remarks are hurled at human beings who are inclined to rotundity, and yet that you do not offend a man more than by calling him *fat*; many a man would rather be called *barber*.

My pen must have got tipsy on too much ink, by mistaking it for undergraduate poetry perhaps, or it would not be reeling about from one subject to another in this improper manner. It shall take the pledge to be more temperate for the future, and curb its *teas* without "crossing the line" of sobriety.

I need not describe our breakfast; it is enough to say, it was a country-breakfast which implies a judicious mixture of solid relishes, and fluids. My host made rather an intemperate meal, and I followed his example in which I was right, and have classical authority to prove it—*fas est ab hoste doceri*—which, I assure you, ladies, merely means, "take a hint from your entertainer."

The meal ended, we did, as most Englishmen do, opened the letter-bag, and skimmed over the newspaper; then we walked to the window and speculated on the weather.

The mist had partially vanished; objects were visible at some hundred yards' distance and Nature seemed about to draw up the curtain.

of her theatre, and let Apollo enter on scene.

"We shall have a fine day now," said I. "I shall not be inclined to listen to the tale promised within doors; you must walk and talk, or I shall not be inclined to listen, though as my curiosity has been excited to peruse the memoirs of the old Admiral's *progress*."

"Do not form too hasty a judgment," said Nathan; "I know Nature's barometer here better than you do, who are a comparative stranger to this part of the island."

"But look," said I; "the mist is rolling downwards, and there I declare is a rich bit of blue sky, with a golden ray, darting through the clouds that has just left it."

"True: let us watch that said cloud; see, as you said, rolling up the hill; but now it is checked in its ascent by the beech-wood; it clears it, like a balloon, at a bound, we shall have it fine—ah! as I thought. It rises it sluggishly and unwillingly; it lights the fire, as it were, and here it comes

retreating slowly, like a discomfited storming-party. We shall have a thorough wetting to-morrow morning."

Not long after he had ceased speaking, light rain began to fall, which shortly became closer and heavier until the fog vanished and the sky was covered with a wrapping of dark gray, whence issued a steady heavy rain.

"You see that I was right; the long continued warmth has deprived the earth of her moisture; the sky has been surcharged with invisible vapour; a current of cold air from our noble Severn has condensed it, and compelled it to return to supply the stream of the parent that gave it birth. Come to the library," added my friend, "we will have a fire lighted, and over its cheerful blaze I will tell you all the particulars I know of the life of my friend Mrs. Lauderdale."

I gladly assented; the comfortable apartment and its well-filled bookshelves seemed to rejoice in the warmth and glare of the fire.

soon shone from its college-grate. We
our chairs by its side, and Jonathan
post thus, as nearly as I can remember
ords, related the story of

THE WIDOWS' FRIEND.

CHAPTER XIX.

In a little town on the coast of Kent, which I shall give the name of Beachley, dwelt one Amos Farley. He kept what emphatically called *the* shop. He sold — the difficulty is to tell not what he did sell but what he did not sell. Under his name were concentrated the grocery trade in all its branches, including brooms and mouse-traps; the Italian warehouse trade, the stationery, perfumery, and toy trades: moreover, he kept the post-office and the stamp-office, and his wife presided over a circulating library of well-thumbed novels and romances from the Minerva press. Amos, too, was tithing-man and vicar's churchwarden — these were his public offices; as a private individual, he

office of president of "The Jovials" — a club that assembled every Saturday evening at the "The Ship" inn, to puff away the unpleasuries of the past week in tobacco-smoke, and wash down all thoughts of sordid gain with the most excellent hollands grog.

Here Amos was in his glory. He was of a cheerful turn of mind, loved a joke, sang a ditty, and was an inveterate smoker, though moderate in his potations.

One club-night, when all "The Jovials" had departed to their respective homes, save the miller and the exciseman, who always broke the club rule — "no liquors to be ordered in after eleven" — by ordering in two large tumblers just before the clock struck, Amos, who had told only one very long story, and sung half an old ditty very much out of tune, sat in his chair of state, and gazed with a lack-lustre eye at the sinking embers of the club-fire.

"What ails thee, man?" said the miller; "come, come, cheer up, man; what should ails thee sick or sorry?"

Amos sighed, shook his head and the ashes

out of his pipe, sipped a little grog, made unsuccessful attempt at a jovial smile, resumed his former occupation of trying find faces in the cinders.

"It is a part of my unpleasant duty," the exciseman, "to peer into my neighbor's affairs. I must make a search into your mind, friend Farley, and see what contraband thoughts you have stowed away in it to-night. If you have secreted any spirits on the premises, your *spirits* are certainly not *proof*, ah! ah!"

"Capital!" said the miller, joining in the laugh, "capital! only you've said the same thing every club night for the last two months. Why friend Amos should sigh at the wind which turns the sails of my mill, I can't think, when every day brings grief to *his* mill, and he has more of the *sweets* of life than any other tradesman in the place, ah! ah!"

"Ah! ah! ah! *that's* an old one, if I like, miller, and borrowed from your ancestor the great Joe," said the exciseman. "Nothing wrong at home, I trust, friend Farley.

young soldier who met with an accident, and is laid up at your house, is not worse, I hope?"

"Oh, no, no! he is better — much better, and will leave us shortly, I suspect," said Amos.

"Now, do you know," said the miller, "I can't say I should like to have had a fine, handsome, young officer on my premises, if I had so pretty a daughter as thy Madeline is, friend Amos; I should as lief see a rat in the family-way take up her lodgings in my garret."

"Ay, and she such a scholar, and so clever at the music-box, too!" said the exciseman. "I have heard her, on melting days, knock better tunes out of those little bits of ivory than our whole church choir put together."

"She is a clever girl and a good girl," said Amos. "I have spent a great deal on her education, and why should I not? She is my only child, and I have been able to afford it. But who knows what may happen? Bad times may come; I may be ruined yet before

I die, and then she will be able to provide for herself—that was my idea when I sent her to school.”

“And a good idea too,” said the miller, “only it do strike me that she is rather too grand like to take up with such as we about here. French and such other furreneering talk won’t make a tradesman’s home comfortable; and as for music, give me the rattling of my own cog-wheels in a merry breeze and the tinkling of pots and pans in the kitchen.”

“Ay, ay,” said the exciseman, “and the hissing of a rasher of bacon in the frying pan.”

“My Madeline, I trust, will not be called upon to refuse the offer of any honest tradesman, though she is not above attending to household affairs, and beats a tailor hollow with her needle,” said Amos, rather proudly. “Her fate is fixed. I may as well tell you for it must soon be known. Madeline is engaged to be married to my lodger, Captain Wrightly.”

“Glad to hear it!—glad to hear it! Here!”

their health — long life and happiness to
m! Captain and Mrs. Wrightly, hip, hur-
!" shouted the miller and exciseman, as
y drained their glasses.

Amos could not refuse to join in the toast,
sighed as he set down his glass, and did
share in the shouts.

"Why so sad and sorry over it, man? Hun-
ds of your rank would give all they have,
something more, if their family goods
t off as well as your female stock has
e," said the miller.

"I cannot guage the meaning of being sad
r such a happy mixture of gentility and
nty," added the exciseman.

"Why, to tell you the truth," said Amos,
ng down his pipe, "I do not half like it.
captain is, I believe, as honourable a man
ever lived, and will treat Madeline well
self; but then his friends—they are high
ank, and disapprove of his throwing him-
away, as they call marrying a tradesman's
ughter. If they treat poor Madeline with
m or neglect, it will go nigh to break her
rt, and that would quite break mine."

"What says her mother to it?" asked the miller.

"She, good soul, is so proud of her daughter, that she thinks she is throwing herself away by not marrying a duke or a general officer at least. She threatens to tell the captain's family a bit of her mind if she comes across them; and I am sure she will keep her word, if they give her an opportunity of doing so," said Amos, smiling the first genuine smile that night at having inadvertently exposed to his club friends the propensity of his wife for keeping her word and speaking her mind.

"But the captain is going foreign, is he not?" inquired the exciseman.

"Yes, he joins his regiment at Brussels in less than a month. That is another cause of my sadness. Madeline wishes to accompany him, but I cannot, will not spare her. I should die at the thought of her being in a foreign country, exposed to the dangers and horrors of a campaign. The captain has consented that she shall remain with us until the war is over, but then the poor girl will fret

the time he is away, and her sorrowing will make me sorry, and shorten my poor old man's days. It is a bad business—a bad business—these uneven marriages never end well. I wish he had been thrown from his horse anywhere but in Beachleigh.”

“Cheer up, man, cheer up,” said the miller; “the captain will come home a colonel, take a snug villa in the neighbourhood, and give you and the old woman over to dinner every Sunday in his carriage. You’ll be so high and grand that you will cut ‘the Jovials,’ and we shall be obliged to take a new name when we lose the jolliest fellow among us.”

Amos shook his head, and, tapping the table, said—

“Never! I’ll stick by ‘the Ship’ to the last.”

“Right, right,” said the exciseman; “but when is the parson to be called in?”

“On Monday morning,” said Amos; “and, as I shall be dull when Maddy’s gone, do you two come and eat a bit of dinner with me and cheer me up. And now, good night. It strikes me I shall never be a jovial man

again, though I shall continue to be one of
'the Jovials.' "

So saying, Amos led the way down stairs, nodded good night to the landlord, and took leave of his companions by a silent shake of their hands as they parted at the door of the Ship Inn.

As he slowly walked to his own home, he passed a preventive man on duty. To his cheerful and rather boisterous hail, "What cheer, mate?" Amos replied by a serious "good night," instead of the usual joke which he was wont to bottle up for, and uncork upon such occasions. The preventive was so much astonished that he watched the president of "the Jovials" to his house-door, fearing his melancholy should take a suicidal turn, and induce him to seek the little pier of Beach-leigh, in order to disappear beneath the waves that lapped against it.

Amos was admitted by his daughter, and when he had carefully closed and barred the door, he followed her without speaking into the little parlour behind the shop.

"Father! welcome. *Father*, I say, what

word of greeting to your *son*?" said Captain Wrightly, holding out his left hand, for his right was still in a sling.

"God bless you, sir! I am late, I fear, and I am not very well; that is, I do not feel very—very—merry just now," replied Amos, taking the extended hand.

"You are late, goodman Amos," said his house, "and here has Maddy been waiting to show you her wedding-dress, which has been sent down from London, and these beautiful jewels; see how well she looks in them!"

Mrs. Farley, as she spoke, fastened a string of pearls on the fair brow of her daughter, who blushed as she looked up in her father's face, to see if his features beamed with a ray of admiration such as had shown itself in the eyes of her lover and her mother when she first put them on.

Amos did admire his daughter without the pearls, and, though he thought she looked still more beautiful with the jewels than without them, yet he could not smile in token of approval.

He turned away sighing, and sat himself in his usual seat by the fireside; he then commenced knocking the expiring embers with the poker, and making as much noise and dust as he possibly could.

Madeline placed herself by his side, and, laying one arm over his shoulders, kissed him, and bade him admire the pearls which she had removed from her brow and restored to their morocco case.

Amos took the box, and held down his head as if to examine the jewels more closely by the light of the fire. He held them there for some little time, and, without raising his face, gave them back to his daughter. Madeline, before she closed the case, took one more view of her little treasure; they were wet and lustrous with her father's tears.

She turned to inquire the meaning of his grief on what she deemed the happiest event of her life, but her father had risen and was leaving the room. She sprang after him, threw herself on his neck, and kissed him again and again.

“Bless you, my child, my only child! may

you be happy when away from your fond mother! I fear—I fear—but no matter—thee is cast—may you be happy!” sobbed Amos, as he removed her gently from him.

“I am happy, too happy, dear father,” said Adeline; and, to prove her words true, she began crying so bitterly that she alarmed her mother and her lover, who led her back into the little parlour.

There was not one of these four persons to whom I have introduced my readers that did not pass a sleepless night upon this momentous occasion.

Amos Farley could not sleep, because, as he have seen, he dreaded lest his daughter should be unkindly received, neglected, and perhaps harshly treated, by the family and friends of her future husband. He had reared her as a tender plant, cherished her in the warmth of his kindly bosom, and he felt that the chilling frost of unkindness would cause her to wither and die. He was aware that he would feel desolate and deserted when she left him, but it was not that that grieved him. He was not a selfish man. He could have

reconciled himself to any thing, provided his much-loved child were happy.

Mrs. Farley's rest was disturbed by anxious thoughts of the future. She was fidgety lest the female world of Beachleigh should not show a proper and marked respect to the mother of Mrs. Captain Wrightly, and yield her that precedence on all occasions which she felt would be her due.

As to the reception her daughter was to meet with in her husband's family, that thought did not harass her much. She believed that when they saw Madeline, they would not only forgive the captain for having married a person in humble life, but applaud him for having selected so elegant, beautiful, and accomplished a girl.

"If they do snub her," she said to herself, "what matters? If she has half her mother's spirit, she will snub them again, and conquer." "quits."

Need we explain why the bride elect slept not? She, who had never since she quitted school left the house of her kind, indulgent parents, and who was petted as an only child

petted, was about to go into the world, to leave her parents and friends—sincere friends, though humble ones—and enter into a higher rank of society, about whom she knew nothing practically, and but little theoretically, and that little through the maudlin pages of her mother's novels. She feared she should find that she was not qualified by education to fill the station to which fortune had unexpectedly elevated her.

She dreaded the stare of inquisitive pride, the haughtiness of the scornful, but still more the silent contempt of those who would look on her as an unwelcome intruder into circles in which she was unfitted. These were the causes of her uneasiness and fear. She hoped, and prayed she might not be deceived in the hope, that by patient and assiduous attentions to her husband's family, by an humble deportment, and an earnest endeavour to acquire the manners and habits of good society, she might win even golden opinions from them at last, and reconcile them to a marriage commenced under such unfavourable auspices. With joy—pure, unmixed delight—did she

think of him so soon about to be her own. She loved him with her whole heart. She had laid bare before him every thought of her guileless mind, and believed that he appreciated her for herself alone. She would endeavour to deserve his love ; and, should she fail in her endeavours, she felt that but one resource was left to her—to return to her kind parents, and devote the remainder of her days to them. Then the thought of her husband having to leave her within one short month of their union, for foreign lands, for the dangers of the battle-field, was almost unendurable, and she condemned herself for having forgotten her duty as a wife in her feelings as a child, by consenting to let him go without her, while she remained to comfort and console her parents. Added to all this, it must be owned, was a feeling of pride, that one so humble as herself was about to be raised to a station in life which many of her friends and neighbours deemed little short of royalty ; she fondly imagined the time, when her husband should return covered with glory, and promoted for his deeds of daring ; when

should have put down the usurper of the throne of France, and settled for life in some quiet house in his native land. Oh! with what pleasure, with what pride, should she endeavour to persuade her father to give up his business, and with her dear mother reside with her, and share in the comforts of her home! Could a mind thus filled with fears, doubts, and anxieties, expect the healing balm of sleep to visit it?

The captain slept not. He was on the eve of marrying a pure-minded, guileless girl, who, he felt, loved him with that calm, intense feeling of affection, which could not but be inspiring. True that he was acting contrary to the wishes of his family, who deemed him mad and silly to throw himself away on one who could give him nothing but her love. He thought that love more than a compensation for all that they deemed a loss—fortune, high birth, connexion. He prized one of Madeleine's little English ballads, sung with heart and feeling, more than all the Italian bravuras and scenas that he had heard in the saloons of the great. Her just conception of charac-

ter, and her intuitive elegance of manners, he was sure would enable her to suit herself to the society into which he was about to introduce her. He felt confident that his mother and sisters would, when they saw and conversed with Madeline, forgive him from their hearts for having offended their pride of ancestry, and thank him for bringing into the family circle one so well fitted by nature and acquirements to adorn it. As to his father, he was already reconciled to the match; for he was one of those who, provided his own selfish pursuits were not compromised or interfered with, cared but little what his family did or whom they married. He was a keeper of race-horses and a hunter of foxes, a deep drinker, and a dicer. He rode the best horses in the county, and gave the best hunt dinners and balls. His answer to his son, when he wrote to him to inform him of his accident, by a fall from a shying horse, and its ultimate consequences, his engagement with Madeline Farley, a shopkeeper's daughter in a little sea-coast town, will give the reader a deeper insight into his character.

l opinions than any description of mine
uld convey. It ran thus :

“ Dear William,

“ I am about to start to Newmarket, where
have staked heavily on the two-year-old,
t have otherwise made up not so bad a
ok. I have only time to tell you that I
ew your mare, Bessy, would spill you some
y if you did not ride her in blinkers. Glad
was no worse. As to the marriage with
e girl you mention, I don't object to a cross,
t think you might have racked yourself up
re comfortably, for I suspect she has but
le corn in her father's bin. Show her out
ong us by all means, and let us see her
ions and paces. I suspect your mother and
ters will not be so glad to see her enter her-
f for a *plate* at our table, as

“ Your affectionate father,

“ JOHN WRIGHTLY.

“ PS. You know you have nothing more
expect from me than what I have already
ne for you—bought your captaincy in the
th, but if you could meet with a good

Added to all these unpapaverous influences, his arm was still painful at times and so Captain Wrightly passed a sleepless night.

CHAPTER XX.

The sabbath morn—the morn of the day preceding the wedding—beamed forth greatly the joy of the four sleepless ones.

They met at an early hour at the frugal breakfast-table, and ate the meal almost in silence.

The captain accompanied his bride and her mother to the church, which was situated amidst a grove of fine old oaks on a rising ground above the town. They were greeted in a kindly manner by their neighbours and friends, and congratulated on their approaching union—for the secret had transpired through the miller and the exciseman—so heartily and sincerely that their spirits rose, and the gloom which pervaded their minds fled like a mist from the surface of the sky.

Mrs. Farley could not but feel that she had been raised several degrees in the estimation of her neighbours, in consequence of the approaching ceremony. She could read it in their eyes, that she was already something more than the mere wife of the *warm* Amos Farley, the well-to-do shopkeeper of Beal-leigh; but she nodded and smiled in order to show them that her altered condition and their thoughts had not made her proud and overbearing.

Madeline was pleased, because she saw that the congratulations of her friends were sincere, and the captain was pleased because he saw that his Madeline was pleased.

Amos Farley promised to follow his family to church; he said that he could not accompany them, because he had something very particular to do before he left home. That something very particular was to sit down by himself and have a good hearty cry, and he did it effectually and felt very much relieved by it. He dried his eyes, put on his hat, and having given it that peculiar look which a person invariably gives it when

made up his mind to be very resolute, to start out at a rapid pace to church, to pray for his daughter's happiness and offer thanks for the comfort which he really felt since his hearty fit of crying.

When he entered the avenue which led up to the church porch, he was surprised to see from the tower-clock that the service had commenced more than half an hour. Time will pass rapidly in grief as well as in happiness. He could not enter the church; he felt that the eyes of all would be upon him, and look reproachfully at *him*—the vicar's churchwarden—the most regular church-goer in Lanchleigh—for being so very late, and interrupting their devotions.

He sat down for a few minutes in the church porch, but he could not sit long. He could hear the sound of the parson's voice, but he could not distinguish the words he uttered—he could not join in the prayers. He left his seat, and wandered through the graves in the churchyard. Near the large aged yew-tree was the family tomb of the Farleys—or even that humble family in that humble

village had its family tomb. Amos stood over it, and read the names of those who had gone before him. There was a broad space left at the bottom of the head-stone, which he felt would no longer be a space if anything befel his daughter. He gazed at it until, in his mind's eye, he read distinctly the words, "Also Amos Farley and Joan his wife and Madeline, their only child." He knew that it was not real. He rubbed his eyes and closed them, but, when he opened them again, there were the same words as clearly engraved as before. He passed his hand over the stone, and was persuaded he *felt* the words engraven indelibly upon it. He trembled, and would have fallen, had he not leaned for support upon the tomb. He closed his eyes, and offered up a silent prayer for aid to his distress. He was answered. He opened his eyes—the illusion had vanished. The bottom of the head-stone was bare. He returned home, and read the service of the day.

Slowly and tediously passed the hours of that day to all the party interested in the

nt of the morrow, and that morrow
ned on faces indicative of aught but joy.
ceremony was performed amidst tears
sobblings; and though the newly-made
e and bridegroom were congratulated by
rge body of friends and neighbours who
though uninvited, been present at the
ding, those congratulations failed to raise
r spirits.

he breakfast over—it was soon ended, for
ne could eat or drink much, though each
sed the other to do so—a postchaise drew
o the door. Madeline fell on her father's
, and, while she kissed him again and
n, she held her mother's hand, and
ped it as though she feared to be torn
her.

he captain, gently withdrawing her from
parents, whispered a few words of com-
and carried rather than led her to the
age. Amos gazed at it, until a turn in
road hid it from his aching sight, sought
little parlour, and fell on his partner's
k.

Amos could not attend to business that

day. He closed his shop; and the house as the neighbours said, "looked more though Madeline Farley was dead than married."

The miller and the exciseman came to dinner. Amos tried to prove himself one of "the Jovials." It would not do. The experiment was a failure. The meat seemed to choke him—the wine would not stimulate him—the tobacco, his favourite indulgence, had lost its savour. The miller and the exciseman retired at an early hour, wondering what ailed the most jovial of all "the Jovials."

CHAPTER XXI.

Madeline for the first few miles of her journey could not overcome her grief. She wept long and bitterly; but the motion of the carriage, the endearments of her husband, his remarks on passing objects, and the thought of the meeting with her new relatives, gradually restored her to calmness. When she drew near the Hall—the home of her husband—all traces of grief had left her countenance. Anxiety to see how she should be received had overcome sorrow.

The chaise drew up at the door. None of the family came out to greet her. Several servants in the livery of the Wrightlys stood ready to usher them into the house. The butler, an old and faithful servant, bid God bless

them both as he preceded them to the drawing-room. It was empty, and Madeline felt a chill come over her as she gazed round the spacious apartment. She could not feel at home, though her husband stood by her side, pressed her to his heart, and bade her welcome. She longed to be alone, to ease her overcharged feelings by tears.

The door was opened, and the captain's father — *Jack* Wrightly as he was called by every one — rolled into the room — for his mode of progression could not be called a walk, so bowed were his legs from living on a saddle from his infancy. He held out two fingers to his son, gave him a hearty slap on the shoulder, and told him he was comforted and founded glad to see him.

The captain, knowing his father's peculiarities, was sure he was glad to see him ; and taking Madeline's hand, introduced her to his wife. *Jack* Wrightly examined her from head to foot, as he would have examined a horse, except that he did not open her mouth to ascertain her age by her teeth, and then shook her heartily by the hand, drew her

her roughly towards him, and kissed her more than once.

Madeline smiled as her father-in-law received her, and told her he considered William a very lucky fellow to have suited himself so well in a wife, as far as shape and figure went.

The captain smiled too ; but burst out into a hearty laugh, when his father told him, in a confidential whisper, that Madeline " had a splendid forehead, was well ribbed up, and was a little too fine about the pasterns."

" But, come," said he, " let us join the ladies. They are in the library, and anxious to meet, so we will throw off at once."

So saying, he drew Madeline's arm within his, and rolled with her down the staircase to the library. The bride's heart fluttered, her head felt giddy, and her eyes seemed dimmed. He opened the door and presented her to three ladies — her mother and sisters-in-law, and assured her they were " confounded glad to see her."

Madeline felt her hand slightly pressed by one of them, and her cheek kissed by some-

body. It was not the warm kiss of affection but felt cold and icy. She shrunk from it and answered the chilly welcome that accompanied it by a slight curtesy, and an appealing look to her husband, who led her from his mother to his sisters. They performed the same ceremony of kissing and welcoming her to Wrightly Hall, in a manner, if possible more frigid and forbidding. Madeline sunk on a seat, and felt as though her heart would break. She wept silently, while her husband was being greeted in a manner almost as cold as the chilly welcome she herself had experienced.

After a few minutes passed in an attempt at a conversation, but which did not get beyond the weather and the roads, a bell was heard.

"I am glad to hear that," said Jack Wrightly. "That is the saddling bell—don't be long in unclothing. The second bell will soon ring. It is the signal to run for the plate—ah! ah! ah! I'll be *dished* if I ain't confounded hungry—ah! ah! ah!"

This was a standing joke at Wrightly Hall

which no one thought of laughing but the perpetrator. The captain led his bride to the apartments assigned them, and bade her be of good cheer, for that his mother and sisters would shortly recompense her for the coldness of their reception, by a daily-increasing respect for her worth, which could not fail to secure their love in the end.

Madeline composed herself as she best could, and the dinner and evening passed off without any thing peculiarly unpleasant to the pleasure of the new arrivals. The captain played *écarté* with his father, and would not allow him to try his skill at "jump-the-cut," as the French call cheating upon king—though he would have done so in habit, had he been permitted to do it.

Madeline played and sang. The young ladies said she did both remarkably well, but that it was a pity she had not studied in the Italian school; and, to show her how superior that school was to her homely English, they favoured her with several duets and songs, of which they were perfect mistresses, far as notes, turns, and shakes went, but to

which they could not give the desired effect, from not feeling the spirit of the respective composers.

A biscuit and a little negus closed the first day at Wrightly Hall. Madeline, as she sought her bridal-bed, attended only by a menial, felt that she should never be a welcome guest under its roof.

Well; the honey-month was over. Captain Wrightly with his wife gladly left the hall of his fathers. Nothing had occurred of which they could openly complain. There was the same sort of respectful civility shown to them as would have been shown to strangers who were not particularly wanted to extend their visits. All was cold, formal politeness on the part of the ladies.

Jack Wrightly, who really appreciated and began to love Madeline better than his own daughters, earnestly begged of her to remain with him, instead of returning to her humble home while her husband was abroad. She returned the kind pressure of his hand, and wept as she declined his offer, urging the promise she had made to her father, and the

condition on which he had consented to her marriage, as an excuse for declining it.

Jack gave her a hearty kiss, told her he loved her dearly, and, as a proof of it, gave her a bank-note value fifty pounds — a thing he had never been guilty of doing to any other individual in the course of his life, and which he only justified to himself by saying, as he looked over his betting-book :—

“It is a mere flea-bite, these two ponies : stand remarkably well for the Derby.”

The ladies took a formal leave of poor Madeline, and said they should be very happy to hear from her. They presented her with some little bits of jewelery, and fancied they had done their duty, and rather more than their duty to the wife of their son and brother. The old butler, who felt for Madeline's situation, put a kitten into the chaise just as it was being driven off, and begged her to keep it “for the sake of one who had passed so many years in a family which she had honoured by uniting herself to it.” The captain, who knew the old man meant it as a proof of his respect for his wife, pressed his

hand, and thanked him. Need I say, the ten was an especial favourite with Madel

Amos Farley, who had passed a most happy month, and almost unjovialized "Jovials" by his melancholy looks and demeanor, was heartily glad when the arrived announcing the return of his daughter. He knew that they could not reach Beachleigh before five or six o'clock; yet, from nine in the morning until they arrive, did he stand at his shop-door, looking along the road to catch a glimpse of the carriage.

Mrs. Farley was almost as much agitated as her husband, but her agitation was entirely caused by the prospect of seeing her child. She had asked a small party of friends without the knowledge or consent of her partner, to meet Captain and Mrs. Wri at tea. She was agitated lest any should go wrong, and her friends depart out being fully conscious of having a gunpowder-tea with a real captain, who on the eve of tasting real gunpowder in the British army.

Customers came in — customers went

Amos could not attend to them. He could only return short and uncourteous answers to their courteous greetings. His heart and mind were in the yellow post-chaise, which was bearing — slowly, too slowly he thought — his child to his arms. When the hour drew near when he knew she must reach home, unless an accident had occurred on the road, he grew more fidgety than ever; he walked up and down the shop, whistled and sung by himself, took pepper-dust instead of brown snuff, broke a string of rushlights, knocked down a cake of greaves, and committed all sorts of enormities and errors.

The sound of wheels was heard; the postilion's whip cracked loudly; Amos saw the chaise approaching. He tried to run out to meet it, but could not. A something very like a ball of worsted seemed to be fixed in his throat, and impeded his breathing and his utterance. He could only point to the door, and sink down upon the nearest seat he could find. What occurred he knew not, until he found himself locked in Madeline's arms, shaking frantically, and sobbing audibly for joy.

Amos would have kissed the captain too, he came to his senses just in time to prevent him making himself so ridiculous, and changed the salute for a most hearty English pump-handler.

Four happier people never sat down to dinner. Amos laughed and cracked standing jokes of "the Jovials" alternately with Mrs. Farley and the captain. Mrs. Farley was too delighted with the elegance of her daughter's dress and the fashionability, as she termed it, of her general appearance, not to anticipate a decided triumph over her friends who were coming to tea. Mr. Moline was happy because she was at home and saw her parents were happy. Captain Wrightly caught the contagion, and confessed that he relished the plain leg of mutton, the plain bottle of port, more than he had ever relished the three courses and the *premier qualité Lafitte* at the hall of his ancestors.

The neighbours and friends who had been invited came. Amos, when he had smoked his pipe with the captain, who smoked a second on a cigar, went up-stairs to the dining-room. He was surprised to see

friends the miller, the exciseman, and several more "Jovials," with their wives and families; but he was delighted to see them. He sang his best songs, insisted on a supper, made sundry bowls of punch, got up a little dance; and not long before the church clock struck "three in the morn" would he permit the fun to cease, or his friends to leave him.

He then went to bed, rather muddled with over-exertion, punch, and happiness, and declared his intention to make a week of it. Mrs. Farley was intoxicated with delight—for she had heard the exciseman's wife whisper to the miller's lady, that "Mrs. Captain Wrightly looked and behaved just as a real lady would have looked and behaved! Indeed, just as if she had been born to it." Her triumph was complete.

The captain and Madeline had been too much engaged in entertaining their humble friends, and seconding the jovial endeavours of the president of "the Jovials," to think of themselves. When, then, those friends were gone, and they sought their room—the room in which the captain had lain many weeks as

an invalid — the thought struck them more forcibly, from contrast, that this joy must soon be exchanged for grief—that a very few days only would elapse before they were parted—perhaps never to meet again in this world. The tears were not dry on their faces when they fell asleep in each other's arms.

* * * *

The fatal day arrived. The boat came ashore for Captain Wrightly. Madeline, as she received his last embrace, sunk on the ground. She felt a presentiment that that was the last embrace they should be permitted to enjoy, and that she was already a WIDOW.

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CHAPTER XXII.

We will not accompany Captain Wrightly on his voyage to the continent; suffice it say, that he wrote to Madeline to apprise her of his safe arrival at head-quarters; that the letter was filled with every argument, affectionately and cheerfully expressed, which his kind heart suggested to him as likely to render her he loved as comfortable and happy as she could be during his absence.

Madeline read the letter to her parents over and over again, kissed it, and placed it near her heart. Amos Farley tried to smile on his daughter to confirm those hopes which the receipt of her husband's communication had kindled. He could not smile cheerfully on

his child, but he pressed her hands and kissed her lips, and bade her trust, through Providence, that all would end well. He then left the room quickly, fearing that the tears which were ready to burst forth from his eyes should find vent in her presence, and give the lie to the hopes he had expressed.

Mrs. Farley patted her daughter on the back, and bridled up as she assured her that "she had not the least little bit of a doubt that dear William would kill an immense number of Frenchmen, and come home a general, with plenty of honours and prize-money and without a scratch."

After the first month of the captain's absence had expired, the cheerfulness of the little family circle was nearly restored. Mrs. Farley, when she was not engaged in writing to her husband, amused herself with her book, music, and drawing, or wandered on the beach with her mother, gazing on the opposite coast—the land of the stranger—the country of the enemy—about to be the scene of slaughter—the grave of many a brave man, probably of her husband. If he fell, she felt that

with him would be buried all her hopes of happiness. In this gloomy view of the future she could not help indulging, for grief had obtained an indulgence, now and then; but, generally speaking, her full trust and confidence in the mercy and protection of a Higher Power enabled her to view her prospects in a more pleasing light, and her heart swelled with pride and joy at the thought of embracing her husband when he stepped on the shores of his native land, unscathed and covered with glory.

Amos Farley would not think of the future, if he could help it. He bustled about his little shop from morning till night, extended his business in every possible way, and entered into all sorts of speculations. Thus, on business during the week, a jolly evening with "the Jovials" at the close of it, and the sight of his Madeline's cheerful face, enabled him to

Drive dull care away,

greatly to the delight of the miller and the exciseman, who could not be jolly themselves

when they saw the President of "the Jovials" sad and sorrowful.

Thus passed the winter months. When spring returned, Madeline conveyed to her delighted husband the tidings that, ere autumn came again, he would, with God's blessing, be a father. He wrote to his wife to express his joy at the prospect of an event which would render her, if possible, doubly dear to him, and begged her to take the greatest care of her health, and to spare no expense in providing every necessary and indulgence to ensure the comfort of herself and her expected infant.

He also wrote to his father and mother to apprise them of the additional happiness in store for him, and suggested to them not only the propriety, but the necessity, of showing to their daughter-in-law, situated as she was, that affection and attention which they had hitherto withheld from her.

Mrs. Wrightly, his mother, upon the receipt of this letter, wrote a formal epistle, a copy of which she transmitted to her son, to Madeline. She invited her to take up her resi-

ce at Wrightly Hall, until the interesting
nt should have taken place. She hinted,
, rather coarsely, at the superiority of the
nforts and conveniences of a gentleman's
se over the humble abode of a tradesman ;
concluded by saying, that it was right
proper that the heir to the family honours
uld be born in the hall of his forefathers.
together, it was a very business-like letter,
it did not display one spark of true
herly affection or feeling throughout its
ely-written sheet. Madeline shed a few
er tears as she placed the letter in her
her's hands, and sat down to write a
d but firm answer, declining the invita-
.

Had she obeyed the suggestions of her
her, whose indignation was excessive at
he pride and pomposity of those people,"
would have written such a letter as would
ctually have put an end to all further
communication between the families.

Mrs. Farley was sadly annoyed that her
ghter would not write as she dictated to
; and told her husband that she was sur-

prised that a child of her's should be so sufficient in "proper pride," and so afraid to "those people" a bit of her mind.

Amos, though angry with Mrs. Wright for wishing to remove his child from the care of her parents, at so trying and dangerous a season, applauded Madeline for the course she had pursued in not offending the family of her husband, and thereby widening breach that existed between them.

It is but justice to the sisters-in-law to say that the elder of the two wrote a formal postscript in their joint names, seconding the proposal of their mother; but, like the letter itself, the postscript wanted even a show of affection and love.

Jack Wrightly did not write to Madeline. He hated letter-writing at all times and under all circumstances. At that particular time he was very busy in finishing the hunting season; and under those circumstances he deemed every moment not spent in the stable, the kennel, or the field, a dead loss. When, however, he had killed his May fox in the forest, seen the hounds put out to good work

the hunters turned out in the salt marshes, mounted one of his best hacks, and rode over to Beachleigh, having betted with a friend, before he started, three to two that he would do the forty miles in less than four hours.

He won his bet easily; and when he had his hackney properly rubbed down, fed, and watered, in the stables of "The Ship," he rode down the street, looking out right and left for the grocer's *crib*, as he called it; for he felt unwilling to inquire for "the shop" of his son's father-in-law. He soon discovered the house, and knocked at the private door, meaning, as he said, "to go to earth in Madeline's own room, without seeing her sire or dam."

In this plan, however, he was defeated; for when Josiah Farley, hearing a rap at the private entrance, popped out of his shop, in his apron and sleeves, to see who his visitor might be.

Jack Wrightly did not reply at once to the question, "Whom did you please to want, sir?" but examined his questioner from "his nose to his fetlocks." He seemed pleased with the cheerful, kindly-looking face, and the

quiet, respectable demeanour of Amos, and to his own surprise, found himself shaking the grocer heartily by the hand in the open street of Beachleigh, and in the open day.

Amos, to *his* great surprise, was as heartily returning the shake of a perfect stranger, a gentleman dressed in top-boots, white cord frock-cut coat, and a Townshend hat. When he found out that the hand he grasped was the property of Madeline's father-in-law, he dropped it, popped into the shop, doffed the apron and sleeves with wonderful quickness, and, rushing round through the passage, admitted his visitor by the private door and led him up stairs into the drawing-room, expressing his delight at seeing him as he proceeded. He bade him be seated, while he went to summon his daughter.

Jack Wrightly, when he was left alone, occupied his time by inspecting "the kennel," as he called the room. The first glance around convinced him that it was Madeline's own room; for it was filled with musical instruments, materials for drawing and embroidery, and with book-shelves, furnished with

stantly-bound works of the best authors in English, French, and Italian. The whole had an air of comfort as well as of simple elegance. He did not wonder at his son being attracted by a girl who, in addition to personal beauty, was accomplished in all that was necessary to make a woman agreeable to the other

"Confound me," said the Squire, "if I could ask my old girl at the hall and her two daughters could have fitted up the place better than the grocer's daughter has done it." As he ended this little soliloquy, the door was opened by Madeline. She was dressed in a simple morning-gown, which her fond but foolish mother had been vainly endeavouring to induce her to exchange for something gayer and more fitted for presenting herself in to the great man of Wrightly Hall. She looked very beautiful, and more interesting than ever, as her father-in-law told her; only he did not *stable-talk*, as he folded her in his arms and kissed her blushing cheeks. He then led her to the sofa, and, apologizing for not having written to her or visited her earlier, explained

to her the difficult position in which a man of fox-hounds was placed before the hunting season was over.

Madeline listened and smiled ; assured that she sympathized in his feelings ; begged he would say no more about what he termed his cruel neglect of a wench who had done for his family a favour by belonging to it. He then used his best endeavours to induce her to leave her parent's house, and make the place her home until her husband returned to claim her. This Madeline declined doing so firmly, at the same time thanking him so sincerely for his kindness, that he felt it would be useless to urge her any further.

Their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Farley, who, dressed in her very best, made a low courtesy to the square and begged he would condescend to partake of their plain family-dinner, which was now ready in the little parlour below.

Jack Wrightly was blessed with a good appetite at all times, and was now really hungry after his long and sharp ride ; so he gladly accepted the invitation, and found himself

ted at the plainly but well-covered table of the grocer." After doing more than justice to a fine slice of salmon and a quarter of lamb, he readily joined his host in discussing the contents of two bottles of particularly good port. Before the second was uncorked, his heart was opened and his tongue loosened. He went through every run of the season; told Amos of all the best meets and the surest dogs in his country; gave him the pedigree of all his horses and hounds; and ended by inviting him to hunt with him next season, and promising to mount him on a safe and well-trained horse, capable of carrying four-and-a-half stone over any thing.

Amos smiled and bowed. The squire told him he was a confounded good fellow, and one of the best talkers, for a tradesman, he had ever met with.

Amos smiled again; for he had scarcely spoken a word since his wife and daughter had left the room. To prevent himself breaking out into a real laugh, he rose and rung the bell for another bottle of wine. This his guest positively declined; alleging, as an ex-

cuse for not "dying game," the length of his ride home, and requested that some one might be sent to order his horse to be brought down to him.

While the messenger was gone on this errand, Jack Wrightly pulled out a large leather-bound pocket-book, and after fumbling about among pedigrees of dogs and horses, receipts for all sorts of canine and equine diseases, lists of running horses and greyhounds, he found two notes of one hundred pounds each. He spread them out on the table before his astonished host, who could not imagine what he was about, and begged him to take them and use them in providing for the wants and comforts of Madeline and her infant, whom he blush to say it, he designated as "the young mare and foal."

Amos positively refused to accept the money, assuring him that he could afford to support his only child, and provide every thing which she might stand in need.

The squire gave a peculiar whistle, slapped Amos on the back, and went up to the drawing-room with the notes crumpled up in his

and. There he found Madeline, and, as he kissed her and bade her farewell, he left the bank-bills in her possession. He then made a low bow to Mrs. Farley, and hurried from the house without speaking another word, jumped upon his horse, and went home "double Derby pace," feeling doubly excited by an unwonted act of generosity, and "the grocer's" port-wine.

Madeline, when she found out that the bits of paper which had been so unexpectedly thrust into her hand by her father-in-law were bank-bills, value one hundred pounds each, consulted Amos on the propriety or impropriety of retaining them.

Amos, though vexed at the squire's conduct when he had declined accepting assistance in his daughter's behalf, advised her to keep them, lest she should offend the donor. She enclosed them in a letter she was about to dispatch to her husband, as she thought they would be of much greater service to him than to herself.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The spring passed cheerfully with friends at Beachleigh. Summer was at hand and Madeline was busily preparing for the reception of her first-born into this world of mingled joys and griefs. She had prayed night and morning that she might be blessed with a son, and that the boy might resemble his father. The event happened two months before the expected time. A boy was born, but under what circumstances ! Dead amidst grief and mourning.

The battle of Quatre Bras had been fought. The news was conveyed to England, and hundreds sought, with anxious feelings compounded of hope and fear, to learn the fate of their loved ones — fathers, sons, and brothers — in that engagement.

The list of killed and wounded was detached as soon as possible to ease the anxieties of friends and relatives. Amos they read it eagerly, and almost the first name that caught his anxious eyes was that of Captain Wrightly, of the —th. It was amongst the list of the killed.

Amos let the paper fall from his hands. He pressed them together over his burning forehead, and calling out, "My Madeline! my daughter! God help thee, for none else!" fell fainting on the floor of the club-room at "The Ship," where he had been in the daily habit of going to read the papers.

His friends, the miller and the exciseman, rushed to his assistance. They rang the bell, and bade them bring water and other restoratives. When these proved unavailing, they sent for the only medical man in the place, and waited in trembling and dread for his appearance. He came as quickly as possible, and by opening a vein relieved the oppression of the sufferer's brain. Amos had just recovered sufficiently to recognise objects and persons around him. The surgeon was binding

up his arm, and bidding him let the tears which were trickling from his eyes have free vent, when a rush was heard, as of many feet on the stairs, the door was thrust suddenly and violently open, and Madeline, followed by her mother and several other persons, sprang suddenly into the room, and threw herself into her father's arms with a shriek that pierced the heart of every one present.

"He lives! he lives! my dear father lives!" were the words she uttered before she became as senseless as her father had been but a few short minutes before.

Mrs. Farley would have fallen to the ground for her knees trembled under her, and her head swam round when she saw the state of her child and her husband, had not the surgeon perceived the state she was in, and supported her until she was placed in a chair, under the care of the landlady and other women who were present. When the surgeon had left her, he turned his attention to Madeline and her father. The poor girl had fallen from the weak arms of Amos, and lay on the floor. The father knelt over her, parting the hair from

forehead, and covering her with the warm blood which flowed from his arm. The banner had fallen off in his struggle to support the child, but the father knew not of it, saw it not. He saw nothing but his dear Madeline bleeding, as he thought, in her own blood, dying before him. With a deep groan he fell by her side, confounded by grief, and weakened by the excessive flow of blood.

The surgeon again bound up his arm, and, applying proper stimulants, again restored him to his senses, and sent him home under the care of his friends. Amos refused to leave the child, and resisted as long as he was able, but he was borne off in the arms of four strong men, and comforted by the surgeon's assurance that his daughter would recover speedily, and should be conveyed to his home. Mrs. Farley had recovered by the assistance of the women about her, who left her, weeping and sobbing as though her heart would burst her bosom with its throbbings, to aid her daughter. The men had all left the room, at the desire of the surgeon, when Amos was carried out. While he was engaged in at-

tending to the fainting child, the mother-like, blaming herself for her selfishness in giving way to tears instead of helping her daughter, wiped the moisture from her eyes, and, repressing her sobs, rose to aid Madeline. No one saw her move, for all eyes were fixed on the daughter, who was giving the first signs of recovery, a faint sigh. As Mrs. Farr passed by the table — the newspaper caught her eye — she saw in large letters, “EXPRESS GLORIOUS NEWS FROM THE ARMY.” With a woman’s quickness, she immediately guessed the cause of her husband’s illness. She did not stop to read the *glorious news*, but turned instantly to the list of the killed, and saw what she *felt* she should see, the name of her son-in-law. All the mother within her bade her restrain her feelings, but she could not. She felt as if she should be choked if she did not scream. She uttered a half stifled cry, placed her hand on her bursting heart, and called on Heaven to help her. Madeline heard the cry, she raised herself from the chair in which she had been placed, and saw the fatal paper in her mother’s hand. A sudden conviction

The truth rushed into her mind. She said, in low, weak voice, "I know it all. My husband is dead — dead — killed in battle," and sank back in the chair, insensible.

She was removed, with the greatest caution, to her own room. Every means that medical skill could suggest was resorted to, but in vain. That night she was a mother, a widow, and childless.

We will not dwell any longer on this sorrowful scene, but change it for a far different one, after a brief explanation of the manner in which the news of Amos Farley's death had reached the ears of his wife and daughter.

When the list of killed and wounded, in which his son-in-law's name appeared, caused him to faint through fear of its effects on his beloved child, and when the medical gentleman's services were put into requisition, Mary, the maid of the inn, heard her mistress say, using a very common term with persons of her class of life, "that Amos Farley was fown in a dead faint."

Mary, who was greatly frightened, only retained the word *dead* in her memory, as

she hurried down the street with her sweet heart, the ostler. As she passed the door of Mr. Farley's shop, she could not resist the opportunity of showing a woman's sympathy with a family which she thought was bereaved of its head. She allowed the ostler to go on to the doctor's by himself, while she entered the shop, and told the assistant shopman, with apron to her eyes, and in sobbing tones, *that* his master was *dead*.

"Dead?" said the shopman, "why he left me alive and well, not five minutes since."

"He mought, or he mought not," said Mary, beginning to grow hysterical, "but I tell you he is dead—dead—and they have gone for the doctor."

"Who is gone for the doctor, you silly girl?" said Mrs. Farley, who had heard an extraordinary noise in the shop from the little back-parlour, and gone to ascertain the cause of it at her daughter's suggestion; "who is ill, tell me?"

"Mr. Farley—marm—is dead—he *is* indeed, up in the club-room," screamed Mary,

now wrought into a state of excitement, and not knowing to whom she was speaking.

Madeline heard the reply, and, with her mother, rushed, as we have seen, to the Ship. The poor girl thus unconsciously caused the fearful consequences that we have related. After recovering from her fit, and learning the mischief she had caused, Mary was seriously ill. She never forgave herself for her want of caution, and never indulged in chattering afterwards. Had Madeline died, she could never have been convinced that she had not murder her.

But to change the scene.

It was the race-week in a country town not far from Wrightly Hall. Jack, or the Squire, as he was called—the former title he had with his intimates, the latter with the little world in the neighbourhood—was one of those important personages on such occasions, the stewards.

There had been capital sport: Jack had won his money, not only on his own horses, but by backing the right horse in every race. After the ordinary at the principal inn, there

was a ball for those who liked dancing, and in a smaller room attached to the assembly rooms there were cards for those who preferred them.

Amongst the number of the card-players was the Squire, who hated dancing, and loved the excitement of play. He played on the night, and the luck of the morning did not fail him. He won every rubber; and when morning dawned, and his adversaries declined playing any longer, he proposed broiled bones and punch.

The proposal was acceded to, and the party retired to a room below, where much was eaten and much more imbibed. When he saw that his friends were excited, he proposed a little chicken hazard. The dice were produced, the table cleared, and the game went merrily on. Jack was still a winner, and by his boisterous mirth and boasting manner had excited the wrath of a neighbouring gentleman, who had been as unsuccessful as Jack had been lucky—on the course, at the whist-table, and with the dice.

These gentlemen had been rivals through

life, though under the guise of friendship. They were rivals in riding, shooting, and racing, indeed in all sports and pastimes. If the truth must be told, they feared and hated one another very cordially.

"Your turn this time," said Mr. Langton, as he threw down his last stake, "but my turn may come to-morrow. It is the last day of the races, and I may be a winner yet."

"You may if you have judgment in betting on the right horse, or luck in getting the office given you," said Jack Wrightly; "but if you mean to back your own horses I will lay the odds against them, and give you a pony to bet them with me."

"You may laugh if you please," said Mr. Langton, "those do that win. Now I'll tell you what I will do. You are very sweet on your horse, Gaby, that won the Hunters' Stakes yesterday."

"There ain't such a horse in this county," replied Jack; "no, nor in twenty counties round."

"Well, now I will run my chestnut mare, the Topper, against him, for one hundred, to-

tomorrow, or for more if you please, upon the same condition," said Mr. Langton.

"Name it, and I am your man, for £500 if you will."

"That we ride ourselves," said Mr. Langton.

"Agreed," said the Squire; "I consider myself a richer man by £500 already. Let us drink to our own success."

The match came off after the other races were over, and excited a great deal of interest. The Squire had drunk deeply, and had had no sleep. Still he was fresh, full of courage and confidence. He smiled and shook hands with his opponent, as they met at the starting-post. The Squire was the favourite at six to four, and few takers, for he was a better rider than Langton, and his horse, Gaby, had won two days before.

The signal was given—off they went. Jack, who knew the lasting powers of the animal he rode, went off at a slapping pace, followed closely by his rival. He maintained his position until they reached the distance-post, and then began to draw ahead. He could hear

his rival whipping his mare as they drew near the lines, and turned round and smiled at him, as he slacked his hand and Gaby sprang forward under him. That smile was his last. A dog shot out from the crowd and crossed the course. Gaby trod on it and fell. His master fell with him, and horse and rider rolled over three or four times. The Squire lived long enough to hear the shrieks of his wife and daughters, mingled with the groans and screams of the crowd—and no longer.

On the same day, and about the same hour that the father breathed his last breath on the race-course of ———, his son fell in the battle of Quatre Bras.

We must change the scene once more.

Months have elapsed since Madeline was a mother and childless in the selfsame hour. She was now motherless ; for, during her long and dangerous illness, her mother would not quit her bedside, though warned to do so, and made acquainted with the consequences that must be the result of her confinement and sleepless watchings.

“She is every thing to me. If she dies,

I will die too. No hireling shall wait on while her mother has strength to do it," her only reply to her friends and to the medical attendant, when they expostulated her on the subject.

As long as Madeline was ill, the excitement of hoping for her recovery, and supplying her with medicines and nourishment, kept her mother alive; but, when her daughter was pronounced out of danger, and the excitement was removed, she became very weak and soon exchanged places with her child. She became the nursed, instead of the nurse. The fever which ensued was the result of exhaustion, and the usual depletives could not be resorted to. Stimulants were tried — a disorder flew to the brain, and a very few days closed the career of the poor anxious mother.

Amos Farley was nearly driven distracted. He had suffered much from his own illness, more from his daughter's. When he lost his partner with whom he had lived for many years in uninterrupted happiness and comfort, he found that his heart was heavy, his spirit

weighed down, and he would have sunk under the blow, had he not still had his child, his Madeline, to love and to live for.

In truly Christian humility, father and child knelt side by side over the lifeless body, and prayed for comfort and aid in their mutual bereavement.

Amos, though comforted, was still sad and in very low spirits. He had long ceased to be a member of his club; for, besides the inability to attend on account of the state of his family, his friend, the exciseman, had been promoted for his good conduct, and removed from Beachleigh, and the miller had taken into him a wife, who did not approve of married men belonging to a club. Amos, therefore, withdrew his name from "the convivial."

As to business, he could not attend to it—nor did he think it necessary to do so. His shopman, who had been with him from a boy, could attend to the grocery trade without him. He had given up the post-office, and sold the books and goodwill of the circulating library, because Mrs. Farley, when she be-

came the mother of a real captain, though unbecoming in her to retain them.

I have said that Amos Farley was *well to do*, which in city parlance means rich. He had indeed, accumulated some three or four thousand pounds, which, by the advice of a friend, he had withdrawn from the public security and vested in a venture at sea. He had bought certain shares in a vessel, which, under the pretence of being a merchantman, was employed as a privateer, and had been very successful in capturing the ships of the enemy.

Misfortunes never come single; they always run in packs, like hounds, sometimes one after another, and at others so closely together that, in sporting phrase, you may throw a sheet over them.

Shortly after his wife's funeral, Amos rode his steady old pony over to his friend, the joint owner of the good ship William Mary; not that he was anxious about the success of his venture in her, but that he wanted something to amuse his mind and divert his thoughts from the sad channel

which they had been flowing. The result of his ride was both amusing and diverting; for he met his friend nearly out of his mind, hastening over to Beachleigh to inform him that the William and Mary had been most heroically blown into the air by her captain, who had fired the powder-magazine, rather than allow himself, his crew, and his ship, to fall into the hands of the enemy, after a well-fought but unsuccessful engagement.

"Never mind," said Amos. "It is hard, certainly, to lose all one's hard earnings at once. But I have my business left to me, and can begin the world again."

So saying, Amos turned the head of his pony homeward. He soon reached Beachleigh, and as he rode up the street he was surprised to see a crowd round his door. He inquired the meaning of so unusual an occurrence, and was told by his old friend the miller that the new exciseman had discovered a large parcel of smuggled goods on his premises.

It was too true. The shopman, taking advantage of his master's inattention to busi-

ness, had been engaging in a little *very* venture on his own account — in con teas and tobaccos.

Amos was a ruined man — ruined ness, ruined in character; for no one miller would believe that he was not a transactions which were known to town. This broke his heart, for he honest and upright in all his dealing never cheated the revenue of one far. He wandered about his favourite ha churchyard, for a few days, gazed lo mournfully on the family head-stone saw, or fancied he saw, the words: — the body of Amos Farley," engraved and retired to his bed and died.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I will not attempt to describe the grief of Madeline at the loss of her dear, kind father. She was an orphan indeed, and penniless; without a home, without a friend to aid her, except her humble neighbours, who were not backward in offering her their assistance in her time of need.

Without a friend? the reader will say. Where were Mrs. Wrightly and her daughters? — her mother and sisters-in-law? She knew not. Wrightly Hall was now the property of the next heir male, being strictly entailed. The ladies had left it shortly after the squire's death, and, as peace was established, had retired on a small income to some place on the continent.

Mrs. Wrightly had not in her own bereavements forgotten the widow of her son; she had written to her more than once, more kindly than Madeline could have conceived possible for *her* to write to one so humble; but real grief subdues pride, and levels all distinctions of rank. She had offered pecuniary assistance, which was declined with grateful thanks by her daughter-in-law, who believed her father had ample means for her support. Thus ended her connexion with Wrightlys.

What was to be done? Madeline was determined not to live on the bounty of her father's friend, the miller, in whose house she had found a home. She had received a fine liberal education, and that education she resolved to turn to account. To take pupils or set up a school in Beachleigh, was not disagreeable to her on account of her unwillingness to remain in a place where she had been so very happy and so very miserable; but it was not feasible, as neither the town itself nor the neighbourhood could boast that class of persons whose children could

tail themselves of the accomplishments she
as so well calculated to teach them.

Madeline knew nobody whom she could
consult on her prospects for the future — no-
body to advise her how to obtain a situation
as governess in a family—no one to whom to
refer in proof of her abilities to perform the
duties required of her but the clergyman of
the parish. He was a man old in years, worn
out in the service of the church, and knew as
little of the world beyond Beachleigh as she
did. Nevertheless, he gave her the best advice
he could offer, which was to advertise in a
newspaper, and give a reference to himself.
She did so : she waited anxiously, expecting
day after day to receive a return for her out-
lay of seven shillings ; but no—not one appli-
cation did she receive.

She consulted her friend again, who advised
her, instead of repeating the advertisement in
the same paper — the fashionable journal of
the day—to try in one of those circulating
among the commercial circles. She did so,
and received an application by the next post
from a merchant in Old Broad Street, request-

ing her to "send him a list of the accomplishments she had on hand, and the terms on which she meant to dispose of them."

Madeline conveyed this letter to the clergyman, who smiled at the business-like production, and bade her reply to it. She did so, stating her ability to teach French and Italian, music, singing, and drawing. The terms she could not name, as she was quite inexperienced in such matters, but assured the applicant that if she had but a comfortable home, a small remuneration enough to provide her with clothing would satisfy her.

Mr. Salterton, citizen and merchant of London, and one of the Worshipful Company of the Drapers, before again communicating with the advertiser, wrote to her referee "in praise of her character." The reply was so satisfactory that the following post brought her an offer of the appointment, with a salary of £80 per annum, to be paid quarterly in advance, and a £20 bank-note "to provide for an outfit and pay travelling expenses."

Madeline offered to pay the miller for board and lodging in his family since he

ther's death. He positively declined receiving it, and bade her promise him that if ever she wanted a home she would seek it in his family.

Madeline left Beachleigh and every one whom she knew in England with a sorrowing heart, and with a presentiment that her future path in life would be a thorny one. She parted with all her humble friends in tears, though they assured her that so clever a person as she was would speedily make her fortune.

One friend with whom she was compelled to part caused her tears to flow more plentifully than all the rest. It was merely a dumb animal—a cat—once a kitten, the gift of the miller at Wrightly Hall. It was intrusted to the care of the miller's family, who promised never to part with it but to herself.

When Madeline arrived by the coach in Whitechurch Street, she found a very handsome carriage, drawn by two magnificent horses, and in all respects well appointed, even the coachman in a bob wig, and a footman in green plushes and a powdered head, waiting

to convey her into Broad Street, as gined.

In this she was deceived. The Broad Street was the house of bus inhabited only by the senior clerk. dence of the Saltertons was at Ful there, in less than an hour after le stage-coach, Madeline found herself.

Her heart fluttered as the carriag at the door of a large mansion, situa own park — as a paddock of ten called—on the banks of the Thames thing indicated wealth and comfort; sort of a reception was she to meet v was she to be treated — as a meni friend? A few minutes solved these The hall-door was opened, the steps and Madeline had no sooner entered t than she found her hands seized by girls about eleven or twelve years of welcomed her to Prospect House, a her to kiss them. As soon as this wa and Madeline had raised herself and the tears which such an unexpected had caused, her hand was taken by a

emanly man, who bade her welcome, and, gently leading her into the drawing-room, introduced her to Mrs. Salterton as Mrs. Wrightly, "the lady who had so kindly consented to take charge of their children."

Another warm pressure of the hand, and another hearty welcome to her future home, brought the tears so plentifully into the eyes of the governess, that she could hardly distinguish the person and features of the lady who thus welcomed her.

While Madeline is changing her travelling-dress in her own comfortable room, it will be as well to give the reader an insight into the family secrets of the Saltertons.

Mr. Salterton was a tall, handsome man, now some eight *lustra* old. In his youth he had been a gay Lothario, and had nearly fallen victim to his love of the beautiful by marrying a portionless girl. Old Salterton, however, forbade the bans on peril of disinheritance, and suggested a match with the daughter of one Mr. Beames, the rich drysalter of Austin Friars. Now Miss Beames was short, stout, and remarkably—ugly, I was going to

say, but ordinary is the term that lads in such cases, I believe. She was the reverse of Salterton's intended, and he shuddered at the notion of such a connection for life. However, she was said to be amiable, and had a princely revenue *spectu*.

Salterton was an obedient son, and of business; matrimony with him, therefore, became, to use up an old Joseph, a good o'-money. The old gentleman arranged settlements without the aid of an agent, and Miss Beames became Mrs. Salterton, to the great dismay of a legion of suitors who longed for her—money.

Neither old Salterton nor old Beames, when they were called in the City, kept their people long out of their expectancies. The house in Broad Street was then appropriated to the senior clerk, and Prospect House was chased as a residence.

Mrs. Salterton was what is called a modest sort of woman, and was contented with the society of her husband and children; though, as far as the husband was concerned,

t reciprocal. He liked company, especially the company of ladies, and was a great man at a round table — the presiding genius over whist, vingt-et-un, and speculation. He would have had his house full every day, and all day; but Mrs. Salterton, who was very jealous, and knew she was deficient in personal attractions, showed so much coolness to the female friends of her husband, that they rarely accepted his invitations.

This drove him to seek society abroad, and to become a member of two or three clubs, where, instead of a round game, he had his whist, and enjoyed himself over a grill and other relishes to so late an hour, that he deemed it useless to go down to Fulham for the two or three hours that intervened between pleasure and business.

For some weeks after Madeline was settled at Fulham, she found herself very comfortable and happy. Mrs. Salterton was very kind to her; and the girls were very amiable, and anxious to benefit by her instructions. Mr. Salterton was very attentive to her, and treated her as a friend and visiter, rather than

as a governess. He was generally in the evening, and appeared to enjoy his home more than he had done since his marriage.

This seemed to astonish his lady, who tortured herself to discover a reason for it. At last she made the discovery. The attractions of Madeline—who, as I have said, was a very fine woman—was the cause of the change in her husband's conduct and habits.

Once let the green-eyed demon possess a woman's mind, and misery to herself or some one else is sure to ensue. In this instance, it fell to the lot of Madeline. She had noticed a great change in Mr. Salterton's manner towards her, especially in her husband's presence; it assumed the tone of constantly harping, with a sneer, on her faults and accomplishments, and a fidgeting which never Madeline was addressed by Mr. Salterton. She would fix her eyes on each of them alternately, and seemed relieved when they were turned for the night. Nothing further occurred to show the feeling which had possessed her breast, until one day, when Madeline

ned to drop one of her bracelets, which Mr. Salterton picked up and offered to replace on her wrist. The lady sprung from her seat, thrust her husband aside, and burst forth in a storm of unjustifiable rage and vituperation, to the amazement of poor Madeline and the children, and ended in a fit of hysterics, from which she had no sooner recovered than she desired the governess to quit the room, and never let her see her again.

In vain did Mr. Salterton interfere, in vain did he apologize to Madeline ; it only made matters worse, and caused the order of banishment from her presence to be repeated with greater vigour.

Madeline obeyed ; she retired to her room, and passed a most wretched night. Before breakfast on the following morning, two notes were brought to her by her maid ; the one was from the gentleman, and the other from the lady of Prospect House. Both of them begged her to quit the mansion as soon as she could, and both notes contained a bill of £50 value as a mark of the donor's respect ; both ended by saying that, after the scene of

the previous evening, it was impossible for them to live together again.

Madeline, whose pride was roused, enclosed both the bills in a blank envelope, sent for a hack-carriage, and ordered the driver to take her down at the first private hotel he came to in town.

This was done; and Madeline, after ordering a breakfast, of which she pretended to eat a little, went out to seek a room for lodging, well knowing that the few pounds she could call her own would not enable her to remain long at a fashionable hotel. She succeeded in getting a small room in the lower part of Clarges Street for a small sum, and thither the landlord of the house conveyed her portmanteaus.

What was now to be done? She was determined not to go into a family as governess again after the injustice with which she had been treated. She doubted, moreover, whether, if a reference were required to the family with whom she had lived, the jealous suspicions might not injure her character. She resolved to employ her time and talents in painting.

and drawing landscapes, and disposing of them to the dealers. She completed several: they were allowed to be very clever, but every one to whom she applied declined purchasing. She next tried to sell to the publishers of juvenile books some little tales which she wrote or translated from the French and Italian; these were declined, except upon terms to which she could not accede—namely, to risk the expense of printing and publishing them herself, and sharing the profits with the bookseller.

Poor Madeline, in despair, resorted to the last resource a woman has; she had recourse to her needle, and through her landlady obtained, what is called, some plain work. On this she managed to avoid starvation for some months, until her health began to fail her from want of air, exercise, and sleep, which seldom visited her eyes.

Her landlady, who saw that she was killing herself, urged her to write to her friends. Her friends! she had none, save the miller, and the poor old vicar of Beachleigh. To either of them did she feel justified in apply-

ing as long as a hope remained of being able to support herself; she worked on until it was found necessary to seek the aid of a mediciner. A neighbouring apothecary was summoned, who advised her immediately to seek change of air, and to obtain a situation in a school in the country.

This advice was easily given, but not so easy to be followed. She told her attendant, who was an aged man, the father of a family, of her poverty and her want of friends. One of his daughters was in a school at Highgate; to her he wrote, and in a few days obtained admission for Madeline into the same school, as a French and Italian teacher, at a salary of £12 per annum.

Madeline did not hesitate a moment in accepting the offer. She paid her kind landlady her rent, and would have paid the doctor for his attendance on her, but he declined accepting any remuneration, and made an excuse of wishing to visit his daughter, that he might drive her to Highgate in his gig.

She was really happy in her new situation, though her duties were very arduous. The

pure air of the hills restored her to health, and the constant occupation of teaching employed her mind, and allowed it no time for prey- ing on itself.

There she might have remained for a long time, had not a prig of a dancing-master insulted her by offers, for which she rebuked him, and complained to the lady of the establishment, who, having formed a design on the heart of the said dancing-master, vented her spleen on the unoffending party, and bade her look out for another situation.

Fortunately she was enabled to advertise, and succeeded in getting another teacher's place in a school, not very far from Bristol, where she remained until death deprived her of her employer. She had given so much satisfaction to the friends of her pupils that they induced her to set up in the same house on her own account.

Her school was full, and every one considered that her fortune was made; but, alas! Madeline knew nothing of housekeeping, nor of the management of her means. She was too liberal in her treatment of her pupils, and

speedily became involved in debt and liabilities. Whispers went abroad; her property was removed one by one; and poor Madeira, by selling every thing she was possessed of, was just enabled to pay all she owed. She then retired to the humble lodgings where Sternpost found her, when she replied to his advertisement for a companion to his wife.

Such were the miseries she suffered from widowhood, and which made her determined to provide an asylum for such as were in a situation as she had been, when her property enabled her to build and endow

THE WIDOWS' ALMSHOUSE.

How and under what circumstances she changed her name to Lauderley will be seen in the history of the chaplain, which will occupy the next chapters.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Come, old fellow, 'floor your Falernian,' as we used to say in our college days, when we were wont to mistake slang for wit," said my friend Jonathan, as we sat awaiting a summons to tea from his excellent lady. "Come, quaff your Lafitte, and we will try one bottle of ..."

"Seltzer or soda, if you like, but no more wine for me," I replied, in a tone meant to be very firm and unflinching.

"Yes, just *one* bottle of an exceedingly nice light red wine, which you have not yet tasted. I must *insist* on your trying my *moulin-au-vent*. It is a wine but seldom met with in England, and there is not a head-ache

in a hogshead of it. Plenty of flavour, but no fire—*bouquet* without brandy.”

“ Oh! well! If you *insist* upon it...”

Jonathan smiled, and rang the bell ere I could finish my sentence.

“ I wish,” said he, as he passed his capacious glass slowly across his face to catch the bouquet of the *moulin-au-vent*, “ I wish I was chancellor of the exchequer for six months.”

“ What alteration in measures would you propose?” I inquired.

“ None in measures. A pint should still be a pint, and a quart, a quart; but both imperial. I would restore the taxes on playing cards and almanacs, and put a new tax on walking-sticks, umbrellas, parasols, and pianofortes, in order to admit the light wines of the continent at an *ad valorem* duty. Why should we be obliged to heat our brains and feverize our blood with the strong, fiery, tartarized, brandied products of Spain and Portugal, at five shillings per bottle, when we might cheer our hearts, without injury to our health, with the high-flavoured but innocent

wines of France and Germany? I suspect that France is called *la belle*, because she bears away the *bell*' from all other countries in the cheapness and delicate flavour of her wines. But that's a bad pun. Never mind. All I mean to say is, that the Society for the Suppression of Vice would have nothing to do but walk about with its hands in its trousers'-pockets, if *vin ordinaire*, at one shilling per bottle, could be obtained at our *cabarets*, instead of glasses of 'warm with,' or 'cold without.' How a hod-man would relish a glass of hock, eh? after skimming up and down a ladder for three hours in a broiling sun! Now, he must be contented with heavy, ready porter, or burn his liver to cinders with spirituous liquors and compounds."

"But consider," said I, "the ruin you would cause, and the outcry you would raise. Physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, chemists, and druggists, would petition the House to save them from destruction. Othello's occupation in the blue-pill and black-dose line would be gone. We should live for ever; then what would the undertakers do? Sex-

tons would no longer make their £
annum in the metropolis ; parish clerk
perish for want of fees, and cemetery
nies would be at a discount."

" A consummation devoutly to be
for," said Jonathan. " Let us drink
annihilation."

" Then," I continued, " consider the
done to the makers and sellers of ch
perry, the importers of logwood ch
cultivators of the only English ab
fruit, the sloe—are *they* to starve?"

" Ay, better starve than poison
country," said Mr. Sternpost.

" And what is to become of the
wine-merchants, brandy-merchants, g
ners, distillers, and ..."

" Let them ' rot and rot,' as *Jaqu*
a plague on all their houses—I mean
houses," replied my friend, pouring o
over-filled bumper of his *moulin-au-v*
he were swallowing a dozen publi
with it.

" But our own *ordinaire*—our pur
malt-liquor," said I, " our real ' John

corn'—you would not crush him in your new tariff?"

"Far from it. If I were chancellor of the exchequer, I would abolish the malt-tax at once, and a greater boon could not be conferred on the greater portion of our countrymen. Every family would have its own tap, and the wives and children of our labourers would have an opportunity of tasting something stronger and better than water or slushy tea. The men would not be forced to seek the alehouse, and selfishly enjoy themselves on the trash sold under the name of brewer's beer, to the injury of their health, and the detriment of their wives and children. Mind, I don't blame the brewers. I believe that, in the country especially, they brew and send out good wholesome beer, but it is sadly adulterated before it is retailed to their customers. If the malt-tax were repealed, the farmer would get a good price for his barley, the poor man would be able to *wet* and convert into malt enough for his family. Even the poor pigs would get fat on the grains, and an immense expense would be saved in collecting

the tax, and in keeping a phalanx of about the country, who have nothing do but to watch the malt-makers, le should defraud the revenue. But I chancellor of the exchequer."

As Jonathan Sternpost concluded range, he filled again, and drank "to agriculture," which I, of course, s with due honours. He then fidgeted a his chair, aimed a "heavy blow and discouragement" at a knob of coal, a down the poker with the air of a man to do something desperate.

"Tea and coffee is ready," said the opening the door very gently.

"*Is* ready. Can't you?—but it d matter, Chambers, I will not take tea fee, although they *is* ready. Bring bottle of the same wine, and tell your not to wait."

Chambers vanished.

"I do hate the very name of tea," s worthy but excited friend; "I never a cottage now but I find the poor wom her children preparing a nauseous n

that they call tea—a compound of birch-room choppings and copperas, for which they pay fifty per cent. more than their betters do for a better article. What good does it do them? None. There is no nourishment in it. One pint of good home-brewed, untaxed, malt-tea would be worth a hogshead of the stuffiness. I have not patience...”

“That,” said I, “is indisputable.”

“I have not patience to—but here comes the wine. I know *you* prefer it to the trash called tea. Chambers, an anchovy on toast; not your nasty paste smeared upon the bread, but a genuine, unsophisticated fish out of the barrel.”

Chambers vanished, as was his wont, without a remark.

“I am afraid,” said I, “Mrs. Sternpost will think me not only a rude, but very naughty man, for deserting her drawing-room, and encouraging you in ‘flooring the Falernian.’ But I will assist you in finishing this one bottle of this very delicious wine, eating an anchovy, or a series of anchovies, and even in

smoking a cigar with a little very weak w
toddy, upon one condition."

"Name it," said Jonathan, delighted.

"That you fulfil your promise of g
me a full, true, and particular account o
birth, parentage, and education—the lif
adventures of Mr. Lauderley."

"Agreed. It shall be done."

Chambers entered with the relishing t
and when, in accordance with his ma
orders, he had brewed and produced a larg
of toddy, and placed the chamber ca
ready to our hands, for fear of accidents
master, bidding him good night in kindl
cents, thus recounted

THE CHAPLAIN'S TALE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

On the coast of Somersetshire, and not far from Devonshire, stands a small village, which, being blessed with a little bay capable of sheltering a few vessels of 100 tons burden, is dignified with the title of a seaport town. I shall call it Riverhead.

In its centre stands a small irregular building, called the market-house, because no market is held there. It used to be a most convenient spot for the little boys to play at marbles and peg-top, because they were protected from the rain, and had nice large red tiles to receive their taws, allies, and tops; when, however, they had pegged the tiles to pieces, the high-constable thought it high time to enclose the building with sparred and barred

gates, to prevent the floor being injured. A square enclosing this neither useful nor ornamental building were the residences of the principal inhabitants. The lawyer's was, of course, the most conspicuous, not only being the largest, and from the pleasing contrast its pea-green door and shutters afforded to the bright red bricks of which the mansion was built, but also from the brilliancy of the large brass plate on the pea-green door, which informed the inhabitants of Riverhead in particular, and the world in general, that the occupier was an attorney and solicitor.

This dwelling was bounded on the south by the one of the two public-houses which were called the inn; on the north by the brewer's residence, which served as a frontage to the brewery, with its malt-houses and store-lars. Next came "the shop," in which many trades were amalgamated; then a series of smaller buildings, occupied by butchers, shoemakers, ironmongers, and artisans, all upon a very small scale, and serving as foils to the long, low-fronted, and lath-and-plaster edifices whose face was nearly covered with a bo-

which, in gigantic letters, proclaimed to every one that it was Miss Straightback's "seminary for young ladies." It was called by the young men and the naughty little boys of Riverhead the *blind* house, because the sensitive and sensible mistress always kept her blinds closely drawn down to prevent the world from looking into, and her pupils from looking out of, the establishment."

From this square a broad and well-kept road, with a wide raised causeway by its side, led down to the lower town, or quay, which was about one quarter of a mile from the upper town. Here stood the other public-house, the Lord Nelson, and some twenty cottages, occupied by those whose business was on the mighty deep—either as fishermen, pilots, or smugglers, or all these concentrated into one. This lower town was built immediately below the mighty cliff, which seemed about to fall upon and crush those who sought shelter at its base. Upon the summit of this cliff stood the church, a fine gothic structure, which seemed to have been placed on its lofty site for a double purpose—as a landmark to

sailors, and to prevent all persons from coming within its walls who were not of the parish, with strong legs and good lungs. By following an ingenious zig-zag path, the hill, which it was called, was almost unclimbable. Halfway between the lower town and the upper church stood the parsonage. This was a peculiar situation, as the rector had only the work of his congregation to perform, and in the scene of his eloquence, and, in consequence, his lungs were only half exhausted as those of his auditors in climbing to the summit. Then, what an advantage was to have his parishioners under his eye, and to know that he was always looked up to by them !

Below this parsonage, and near the foot of the zig-zag path, stood a very neat cottage, covered with vine and jasmines, and surrounded by a garden filled with flowers and evergreens. A never-open green gate, which let on to a narrow gravel walk, leading to the door, bore in white letters the name of the parson, and modestly announced that he

on and apothecary, without the aid and assistance of a bottle of blue, red, or green fluid.

Mr. Lauderley had been a surgeon in the army, or, more strictly speaking, an assistant-surgeon, for he had not arrived at the higher honour before peace put an end to his occupation altogether. With his scanty half-pay he might have been starved—he was half-starved had he not heard that the aged general-practitioner of Riverhead required an assistant. He stood for the situation, and was elected to it to the great disappointment of a numerous body of brother medical officers who were candidates for it. When his predecessor followed his deceased patients to his last long home, his assistant succeeded to his practice. He took to the furniture, gallipots, and other complements of the trade at a valuation.

Lauderley got all the practice of the place because there was no one to oppose him within a circle of many miles; but the nurses intimated to him that the ladies would feel more comfortable and confident under his

surrounding country. Without wasting a thought on the family of the squire, which he knew was an impregnable fortress to a poor apothecary meditating an attack matrimonial, he turned his mind's eye on the dwellings of sundry farmers who lived in comfort and respectability in the vicinity. Amongst all his female farmer-patients, however, he could not select one who, he thought, would be silly enough to exchange the comforts of a dairy for the discomforts of a surgery, and make out an existence on cold shoulders of butter instead of revelling in clouted cream and custards. Moreover, Lauderley could not make up his mind to marry a half-educated person who would not be a companion to him when his business permitted him to enjoy a few hours in his humble home.

Whilst Lauderley was hesitating between remaining a bachelor, or going on an expedition into some unknown region—like Cæsar—in search of a wife, his meditations were interrupted by the servant at the seminary for young ladies, who came to beg his

immediate attendance on Miss Straightback, an English teacher, who, as she said, "had been long suffering from the low moloncholics, and was then kicking the very stockings off her feet in a violent fit of revulsions."

As Lauderley hurried into the town, he amused his thoughts by wondering what was of a place the inside of the "blind house" was. No male inhabitant of Riverhead had ever been allowed to penetrate the shrine of Miss Straightback. The place was a mystery to all—saving one little back parlour, which she received her pupils' friends when they came on a visit to their children, or to pay their bills. Even the whitewashing and painting of the interior, during the holidays, was done by herself and her female servants, and the tradesmen were never admitted further than the back courtyard, where a shed was erected for their accommodation, with the cautious lady—who was always talking of "the awful responsibility of a guardian of feminine youth"—bargained with them and inspected their commodities.

"But surely," some one may say, "surely the apothecary had been admitted into this mysterious dwelling."

No such thing. Miss Straightback had never been ill herself, and was determined that her domestics and pupils should never be ill. Diet and regimen, with periodical doses of Glaubers or Epsoms, and plenty of fresh air and exercise on the sea-sands, she knew to be worth the whole contents of an apothecary's shop.

"Early to bed and early to rise."

"After dinner sit a while."

"After supper walk a mile."

"Take physic and be sick."

He thought far more valuable apothegms than any that are to be found in the most audite treatises of the members of the College of Physicians.

Lauderley, preceded by the Abigail bearing lantern—for it was night, and Riverhead tasted not of gas, or even oil-lamps—arrived, without stumbling above five times over all sorts of abominations strewed in his path, at the Establishment."

He was admitted by the agency of a pass-key, and shown into *the* parlour. He was shortly joined by Miss Straight, who put on her spectacles, and, by the aid of the one dip candle in a brass candlestick, surveyed the ex-assistant military surgeon without saying one word, or replying to a low bow, and respectful "Good evening, madam," except by a curtesy so descending, if not condescending, that Lauderdale thought she was made like a jointed puppet, and could slide down within her case.

Lauderley felt a little indignant at the prolonged scrutiny, and felt, moreover, as if the blood of his lower person had been pumped up into his face; but that might have been from the pressure of his boots, or the too-close-fittingness of his surtout.

As Miss did not seem inclined to close the negotiation, the surgeon thought it proper to do so himself, and when he politely requested to see the suffering teacher,

Principal shook her head very mysteriously, and saying,

“Too young—too good-looking by half,” marched out of the room, taking the dip-candle with her, and leaving the surgeon in the dark—literally and metaphorically.

A few minutes elapsed; and Abigail, the maid, entered with dip number two, and after assuring Lauderley that every means had been resorted to, to convey the English teacher from her room to *the* parlour, begged of him to follow her up stairs, and not to turn his eyes right or left, if any of the young ladies *snig-
led* as he passed.

“They never sees no male critters here, and they’ll stare at ’e, as if ’e was a spectre”—meaning a spectre, we presume.

Lauderley certainly heard several sounds of suppressed laughter, slight coughings, and violent sneezings, and he could not help turning to the spots whence these sounds seemed to proceed; nor could he help seeing glimpses of several very pretty, laughing, merry faces, at the half-opened doors of the bed-rooms, in the gallery through which he was being con-

ducted. He even felt his coat-tail g tugged, and a paper pellet hit him o face, but the advice of the Abigail wa in his ears, and he walked on as sedatel demurely as if he should not have lik have a game at romps with the mischi little laughing elves around him.

At length—the length of the gallery traversed—he came to a door, which the gail gently opened, and he was shown i miserable, little, half-furnished apartme which were three beds, intended fo English teacher and two little governess pils. It had an air of discomfort, such seldom seen out of a country boarding-s or a London cheap lodging-house. On the beds lay the form of a fair, young apparently of some twenty or three-and-t years of age. On either side of her stout young lady, who was exerting a strength to restrain the convulsive effo the sufferer by lying on one of her arms

Miss Straightback stood at the foot o bed, instructing the box-maid, a pow bony-framed woman, by nods and signs

to prevent the legs of the invalid from throwing off the bed-clothes, by sitting on her knees.

Lauderley at once saw what ailed the patient, and, cutting off a portion of the Abigail's apron-string, lighted it at the candle, and passed it backwards and forwards under the teacher's nostrils as it smouldered away.

At first the patient struggled to avoid the application, but, after a while, a few heavy sobs were succeeded by deep sighs, and the teacher opened her eyes. After persevering in the use of this homely stimulant until he saw that consciousness had returned, and all convulsive efforts had ceased, the surgeon begged that he might be left alone with his patient.

This Miss Straightback most positively refused. "It was indecent in the extreme—it might ruin Riverhead establishment for young ladies, if it were known that the English teacher was left alone with a man, and that man an unmarried man and a *militaire*."

Lauderley, knowing that no other medical man could be obtained, was as positive as the

school-lady; and, having told her that *she* would be responsible if any thing fatal was the result of her over-delicacy, succeeded in getting her, her maids, and the two governess-pupils, out of the room.

For two hours did Miss Straightback walk up and down the long gallery, wondering what the doctor could be about with his patient. She knocked once or twice; but Mr. Lauderley, on opening the door, merely put his finger to his lip, signifying, "Silence, madam!" and closed it again in her face. Only once did he speak to her, and that was to order two eggs to be beaten up in a large glass of sherry, with a little white sugar.

"Eggs, sherry, and white sugar, for an English teacher!" It was monstrous! but they were furnished.

Miss Straightback would have administered the unwonted dose herself, had not Lauderley taken it of her, and bowed her out of the room. For one hour more did she pace the gallery. She heard voices in conversation; but, though she took off her shoes and crept

on tiptoe to the keyhole, she could not distinguish a word that was said.

At last the surgeon left, saying he would send some medicine immediately, and see his patient in the morning.

“Poor girl,” said Lauderley, as he sat in his easy-chair, after despatching a draught by his only assistant—the stable-boy—“poor girl! I pity her—yet it is but the old story—an orphan daughter of a clergyman, suffering under the usual clerical complaint, a large family and a small income. Death comes, and away goes every means of support. To relieve her mother and help her little brothers and sisters, she seeks a situation as teacher in a school—much better have been a nursemaid, a housemaid, or even a scullery-maid. What sufferings, insults, and ill-treatment has she not revealed to me this night? It is *too* bad, by —.”

“She is very pretty—very delicate—looks consumptive; but that may be merely the result of little food and much work. I think she would make an admirable wife.”

As Lauderley came to this conclusion, he

fancied Julia Manning — for that young lady's name — in the chair opposite to him, mending one of his stockings, smiling sweetly between the stitches. It was a very homely fancy, but it seemed to him. He lighted a cigar, mixed a tumbling toddy, and, as the one went out and the other went in, he said aloud—

“ I will,” and went to bed.

Lauderley did as he said he would do. He proposed to Julia Manning, and in due season was accepted and married.

Mrs. Lauderley, on the day of her marriage, was presented with a handsome white rug, with red eyes, worked in worsted by her employer's own hands, as a hearth-rug, with the express understanding that she was to reveal the mysteries of the “ blind-brother ” and to instruct her husband to receive his pupils to her school.

Poor Julia accepted the rug, and performed every thing that was required of her. She was too happy to refuse any thing, for she was no longer a teacher in a school.

Publicity has lately been given to the

ferings of the milliners' girls in the great metropolis. Facts have come to light in their melancholy lives which must fill every feeling heart with horror and dismay. Eighteen—ay, twenty hours' work, day after day, in close, badly ventilated, cheerless rooms. Disease approaching unseen—or, if seen, unnoticed by the cruel employers, until the victim of finery and inconsiderate luxury is turned out and sent home to her friends, if she have any, to perish before their eyes.

It is a heart-rending picture—but we doubt whether the poor milliner, hard as is her fate, does not pass many happier hours than the school-teacher in an ill-regulated “Establishment.” The former can talk and laugh with her companions as she plies her needle, but the latter must always be not only smileless herself, but the cause of smilelessness in others. From morn till night she must watch her little charges—repress every joyous feeling in herself, and every joyous sign, however innocent, in them. She must bear with all their ill-humours; put up with all their stupidity; be looked upon and treated as a spy

on all their actions; be tormented by her pupils; and slighted—if not ill-treated—overworked, and underfed by her employer.

The reader may exclaim—"The picture is overdrawn!"

I deny it. Would that evidence of facts—facts stronger than I have alluded to, could be brought before the public; the cry of "Shame!—shame!" would be heard in every part of the country. There are *female* Smikes.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Lauderley and his wife were very happy. Time seemed to fly with hasty wing over their heads; yet they wished him to fly faster, that the period might arrive the sooner that would make them parents, and so endear them more closely to each other, by giving them an additional tie to bind their hearts.

The much wished-for period arrived. A male child was born; and Lauderley, as he embraced his wife and shed tears of joy at knowing that she was safe, felt that he was truly blessed—truly happy. A very few days, however, passed, and where was his happiness?—blighted!—withered!—gone!

The child sickened, and, though the father exerted all his skill, and the mother watched

and watched, until her eyes grew dim with watching, his skill and her tender care availed not. Death was not to be repulsed! He crushed his little victim; and, as the gash closed over its remains, the parents felt the severity of the blow; but they murmured not. They wept in each other's arms, and, sinking on their knees side by side, prayed that their grief might not cause their hearts to rebel against the decree of Him who had given and taken away their infant all at one and the same moment.

A second and a third time were their hopes blighted. Sorrow and disappointment rendered the tender frame of the childless mother more tender. Her body wasted away day by day and a continued cough rendered her days tedious and her nights sleepless. Landers saw, but could not check, the progress of this fearful malady—consumption.

It did its work slowly, but surely. At last she was again a mother, Julia Lauderley bore a corpse; the child, however, was saved, though born after the mother's death, and the father vowed a vow that if the little Pos-

mus—for so he called his boy—should be spared to him, he would bring him up to the service of the church.

In order that no human means might be left untried for the preservation of his infant, Lauderley selected from amongst his country patients a strong healthy woman as a nurse, and watched with anxious eye and beating heart the result of the experiment.

It proved successful: the child grew and thrived, and as soon as it could walk alone and lisp the name of father, he removed it to his own home, and placed it under the care of an elderly lady—our old friend, Miss Straight-back, who, I am sorry to say, lost all her pupils, and with them her means of support, in consequence of a forward young lady having escaped from the back drawing-room window, and run away from “the Establishment” with a lieutenant in the coast-guard service. Less out of pity for her sad situation than a belief that she would do her duty to his child, Lauderley had solicited her to reside with him as governess and housekeeper. She consented, but reluctantly; it was such

an "awful responsibility" to live in the same house with "a man." When once this fearful idea had lost its terrors, she became happy and cheerful, and performed her duties with zeal, and, need I add?—discretion.

The "Seminary for young Ladies" stood unoccupied for some years. No lady had the courage enough to open a school in a house which bore so bad a character, and had so little accommodating drawing-room windows. The blinds were closely down for nearly several seasons; at the end of that period they were drawn up—the house was converted into a "Riverhead Grammar School."

The squire in his will had left a noble sum of money to endow a school for the benefit of the town and neighbourhood; not only was a liberal salary assigned to the master, but a fund was provided in aid of the maintenance of four scholars at the University.

To this school little Posthumus was sent at eight years of age, and from nine in the morning until five in the evening, kept by his kind friend, Miss Straightback, in a state of violent agitation. She passed the tedious

hours until school was over, in imagining all sorts of naughtiness that she feared would be instilled into the mind of her innocent charge, by the rude, unfeeling little wretches, who thought nothing of rumpling his neatly-plaited drill, and inking his immaculate nankeens. She saw treason in tops, rebellion in hoops, and the worst of vices, in her opinion, uncleanness in football and cricket. She feared that her reign was over, her despotism at a discount.

Her fears, however, were groundless. Postumus, young as he was, was yet old enough to understand the views which his father entertained for him. They had been explained to him too frequently not to have made a deep impression on his mind; without being dull and miserable, the boy was sedate and studious.

The hours that his schoolfellows devoted to play or idleness, he employed in reviewing the lessons of the morning, or in walking and talking with his father or his governess. He was laughed at, and called by all manner of funny names, but he merely smiled when

he was called a "spoony," or a "muff," and put up with kicks and cuffs most stoically. All thought him a little coward, and told him so; but he convinced a big bully to the contrary, by knocking out a few of his front teeth, and leaving him a discoloured eye, having spoken disrespectfully of his father. This had the effect of freeing him from all taunts and practical jokes for the future.

His career as a scholar was so successful that he was elected first exhibitioner, and sent to college with testimonials so very favourable, that the tutors were predisposed to show him that attention and regard which his conduct in the University secured to him for after-years.

When he had taken his degree—a creditable one, both in classics and mathematics—the master of Riverhead Grammar School offered him the situation of assistant to himself.

The offer was gladly accepted, as it would not only afford him sufficient support without further taxing his father's scantily filled purse, but enable him to enjoy the society of his kind and much-loved parent.

When of age to be ordained, he obtained the curacy of an adjoining village, the duties of which he could easily perform without interference with his pursuits in the school. His conduct was so satisfactory, that, when the principal retired from his mastership, the trustees of the school offered the situation to Posthumus. He gladly accepted it ; and, by his father's assistance, was enabled to purchase the furniture and other necessities for carrying on the business of the school.

Mr. Lauderley, as if the end of his existence had been attained in the establishment of his son for life, as he thought, died shortly afterwards. He bequeathed what little money he had managed to scrape together in his ill-paid, arduous profession, to his son, excepting a legacy to his friend, Miss Straightback, who, although now far advanced in years, was still active and capable of superintending the domestic affairs of her nurseling, whom she loved with almost a mother's fondness. With what pride would she speak of "*her boy*, the head-master of Riverhead Grammar-school !"

She was not selfish in her love. She inti-

mated to her charge the propriety of a lady at the head of the establishment. Mammas, she said, and true, would never believe that small-tooth-combs and such other necessary but unpleasanties, were properly performed unless there was a Mrs. Head-master to inspect the operations, and preside over the physical "spring and fall," which were then indispensable.

Posthumus yielded a ready assent to the proposition, and married the sister of the woman with whom he had been very intimate in college. She was poor; that mattered not, as he was comparatively rich. She was very sensible; rather interesting than beautiful; too meek, too retiring, for the duties involved on her: that mattered not, as his band thought, as she had a most capable deputy in his former nurse.

For twelve months all was happy and prosperity at the school. Posthumus was much liked by the boys, who gave him but little trouble and annoyance. They spent their fun and spite on the ushers. His

care and judicious management of his pupils were so well known and appreciated, that his house was full; and so it would have been had it been twice as large as it was. His wife did the duties of the reception-room so well, that the parents were satisfied that she was a most efficient person in her situation; and, as she was over-indulgent to their sons, furnishing them with little delicacies, and shielding them from punishment when she could do so conscientiously, the boys did not fail to confirm their parents in their belief of her efficiency.

The first interruption which Posthumus experienced to his prosperity and happiness, arose from the loss of his friend, Miss Straight-back. In her zeal for the cleanliness of her pupils, she over-scrubbed herself and them on a damp, cheerless day. The result was a violent cold. Fever ensued. The medical successor of Mr. Lauderley was called in; but he could not prevail on his patient to submit to his orders. "She would not lie in bed; she could not, when she was wanted in twenty places at once: besides, it was small-tooth-combing-day, and that was a day above all

others marked with chalk in her weekly calendar. The following day was rice-pudding day, and she always made them herself. Every day, in short, brought its peculiar duties with it; and to those duties Miss Straight back was resolved to attend as long as she was able.

She did so; and when she crawled to bed on the fifth night from her first attack, she felt that she should not rise from it again. She sent a message to "her boy;" and when Posthumus obeyed her summons, she begged the servant to leave the room, and requested him to give her a small box from beneath the bed. She opened it, and took out a small yellow canvass bag, and placed it in his hands, telling him that it contained the savings of a long life of servitude, which she had put by for him. She then clasped his hand, begged of him to give her one kiss, and, praying her Maker to bless him, turned on her side and never spoke again. The bag held about seventy golden guineas.

Scarcely had the severe grief of Mr. and Mrs. Lauderley, for the loss of so valuable a

erson, subsided, when another and far more serious evil befel them.

Mrs. Lauderley was daily expecting to become a mother. Her health, naturally delicate, had suffered greatly for some weeks, and poor Posthumus was alarmed on her account, although the medical attendant had assured him that his alarm was groundless, and that, after the birth of the infant, she would be quite well again. Filled with these fears and anxieties, his duties became burthensome to him, and, for the first time in his life, he wished he were any thing but a schoolmaster.irksome as they were, however, his duties must be attended to. He went into school, and had scarcely taken his seat and summoned the sixth form to their lessons, when the headmaster reported to him that one of the boarders complained of being unwell. He hinted at the same time that, in his opinion, the illness was put on in consequence of an inability or unwillingness, on the part of the invalid, to say his morning's task; that he was shamming, in short, or pretending to be ill, and

wished to commute a flogging for a blood-dose, or some equally nauseous draught.

Posthumus summoned the boy before him. He examined his tongue and his pulse; finding that the former was a little furred, the latter rather rapid, he, in spite of the dissuasions of his usher, ordered him to the sick room, and sent for the doctor to examine him.

The apothecary's report went far to confirm the views of the usher. He said—

“The boy's stomach was slightly deranged, but that he believed, if the lesson had been learned, no complaint would have been heard. An emetic, and a little subsequent physic would set all to rights again.”

Of course, Posthumus felt no further anxiety on the subject; and, as the stairs which led to the sick room—the hospital, as the boys called it—were steep and rather dangerous to mount, he would not permit his wife, circumspect as she was, to climb them, merely to see a boy who was shamming ill to shirk his lessons. Mrs. Lauderley contented herself therefore, with making him a little nice arro-

root or sago, or some other equally innocent but enticing food, and sent it up to him.

The usher visited the boy when the others retired for the night, and reported that he was very much better, and wished for some supper. The dose of arrowroot was again administered, and one of the ushers was ordered to sleep in his room.

In the morning the boy came into school and said his lessons. After breakfast, he again complained, and was again ordered to the sick room, and visited by the apothecary, who again reported that nothing serious was the matter with him. To the question of the master, "Should he send for his friends?" the doctor replied with a smile, and something more than a smile, "that such a proceeding would be absurd."

Of course, Posthumus was satisfied, and did *not* send for the friends. The result proved that both the doctor and he were wrong.

In the course of the afternoon, a servant told Mrs. Lauderley that she really believed that the poor boy was more seriously ill than the doctor gave him credit for. He was hot

and restless; fell into frequent short snatches of sleep in which he talked of his home, his pigs, and his rabbits; he woke frightened, and often unconscious of his whereabouts. He treated her as if to his brothers and sisters, and often humiliated the poor woman by calling her by very rude names, that he had acquired from the boys of the town.

Mrs. Lauderley would have gone up to her room, but the maid would not allow her to do so, she had summoned her husband from the school-room. He obeyed her summons, and went to visit the patient, who talked more rationally as ever, and said he was better. Mrs. Lauderley humus thought that his servant was a man with strong inventive faculties, and he was indulging in the result of them on this occasion. Nevertheless, to "make a matter doubly sure," he sent for the boy's father, who was staying with a family in the neighbourhood, and bade him see the little patient in the presence of the apothecary. He did so, and left him satisfied that nothing was the matter.

Mary, the maid, was very indignant

her word should be doubted. She said she hoped the boy would die, and then they would know that she had spoken the truth. Her hopes were confirmed ; for when the doctor came to see him before he retired for the night, he found him in such a state as to alarm him, accustomed as he was to such scenes. He communicated his fears to Posthumus, who immediately sent for the child's brother, and begged him to take a chaise and bring over his parents, who dwelt a few miles off, as speedily as he could.

The young man complied with his wishes, but returned without his father and mother, who had that very afternoon set off on a visit to see some relatives at a distance.

Not long after the chaise had returned, the poor boy died in his brother's arms. Poor Mrs. Lauderley, when she heard of his death, which was judiciously announced to her by the triumphing Mary, was greatly shocked. The thought of what the sufferings of the poor little fellow's mother would be when she heard of the loss of him—her youngest, her darling child—brought on a violent fit of crying, which

ended in hysterics. When Posthumus turned to the parlour, after seeing that was properly done to the corpse, he found wife struggling violently in the arms of M who, strong as she was, could scarcely h her on the sofa, and prevent her falling to ground.

Posthumus was frightened at the sight, his grief for the loss of his little pupil superseded by fears for his wife's life. He thrust Mary aside, and bid her fetch the doctor, while he held the struggling sufferer. Mary soon returned with him, for he had not left the house. He applied the usual remedies, and relieved the hysterics, but ordered her to be put into bed immediately. In about an hour's time, Posthumus was told that his hopes of being a father were destroyed, and that his wife was seriously ill.

In the midst of his grief for the disappointment he had met with, and for his wife's illness, Posthumus had to arrange matters for his pupil's funeral, and the removal of the body to his parents, who were not yet returned to their home, and were still unconscious of the

loss. In this he was assisted by the child's brother, who, with tearful eyes, thanked him again and again for his kindness to the deceased, and expressed the regret he felt at the serious illness of Mrs. Lauderley, brought on, as it had been, by his brother's death.

This was consolatory to the master, as he felt assured that all things would be properly explained to the parents as soon as they returned—a feeling that was confirmed by a letter from the brother, announcing his safe arrival at home with the corpse, and repeating the expressions of his gratitude for the attentions conferred on the child, and his regret for the consequences of his death.

Posthumus was in daily expectation of receiving a letter from the child's parents, to inquire after the health of his wife, and to thank them both for their care and attention in the sudden and fatal illness of their son. After the lapse of a fortnight, the expected letter came. Posthumus opened it, and, to his surprise and dismay, found that it contained charges of the grossest cruelty and neglect, founded on the representation of the

child's brother — of him who had expressed himself so gratefully both by word and letter for the attentions bestowed on the sufferer.

He was accused of having turned a deaf ear to the child's complaints, of keeping him from school and to his lessons when he was ill, and of supplying him with improper food during his illness, and of neglecting to procure medical aid until it was too late.

Mrs. Lauderley was also grossly attacked for displaying a want of feeling in not having once visited the sick room, though she knew the boy was dying, and for having sent him a lot of messes instead of supplying him with food suitable to his situation. The letter was accompanied with an order to him to send in his bill immediately, and a threat that his infamous conduct, which had caused the boy's death, should be published to the world.

Who can describe Lauderley's feelings on the receipt of this unjustifiably cruel letter? He sat brooding over it for some time, wondering by what means his conduct in the business had been so shamefully misrepresented. His

was great, but it was overcome by his indignation. He knew that the mother of the child was weak in mind and in health, and that she doated on this her youngest with all a mother's love; but he could not imagine that her husband, who was a sensible, strong-minded man, could be induced to give credit to stories of neglect and cruelty in one for whom he had professed to entertain a high opinion and a sincere regard.

He suppressed his indignation, however, and wrote a calm, straightforward letter in answer, explaining every circumstance as it occurred, and quoted largely from the brother's letter, to prove that he had, at one time, been fully satisfied with every thing that had been done for the deceased. He inclosed in this a note from the medical gentleman who had attended the child, in which he described the case fully, and the plans that had been pursued in it. He exonerated Mr. and Mrs. Lauderley from all blame whatever, and said, that if any blame attached to any one it was to himself, for that he had been called in at an early stage of the illness, and in time to save the child, had it

been the pleasure of the Giver of Life to the boy to his parents.

These letters produced an answer more cruel and insulting than the former. The accusations it contained were so gross, and the language in which they were expressed was so gross, that the apothecary was obliged to bring an action against the party for defamation of character, and advised Posthumus to do the same.

Posthumus not only declined doing so himself, but succeeded, by alleging the surprise of the parents at their sudden and gross conduct in excuse for their unwarranted severity, in inducing the apothecary to lay aside his thoughts of bringing the action he meditated. He laid the correspondence before the trustees of the school, who not only exonerated him from all blame, but applauded him for the course which he had pursued.

Mrs. Lauderley was still very ill, and Posthumus took care that she should not suspect that her conduct had been called in question. Mary, however, who had received a couple of guineas "for doing well,"

mistress ought to have done," could not resist telling of her good luck, and talking of the horrid stories that were circulated in the town and neighbourhood. As such stories seldom lose any thing when repeated, Mary left her mistress with the pleasing impression on her mind, that the little world of Riverhead believed her to be a cruel, hard-hearted woman, and a murderess of one of the children entrusted to her care.

The result was an increase of fever, and an aggravation of all the worst symptoms of her case. It was doubtful, indeed, whether she would survive the blow. Mary was sorry for the mischief she had done; and, being afraid she should be turned out of her situation for her folly, wisely resigned it, and then proclaimed to the world that "Her missus was *sich* a woman it was impossible to live with her."

Posthumus, while thus agreeably situated, received several notices from the parents of his pupils, that they should remove their sons at the end of the quarter, and place them where a *little* attention and kindness would be

shown to them in case they should be and where the mistress of the establishment would not be too proud and hardhearted to visit the sick room of a dying child.

He received, in short, so many insults and heard so many exaggerated accounts of neglect and cruelty, that he was resolved to resign a situation that had become hateful to him. He did so ; and, although the trustees and many of his friends did all they could to induce him to remain, he left Riverhead and took a curacy in the parish in which Wrightly's school was situated.

There his wife, after lingering some months, died, and left him a heart-broken, but a plaining mourner.

In his grief he received many kindnesses from his parishioners ; but from none did he receive greater or more valuable favours than from the poor widow, Mrs. Wrightly. It was therefore, that lady had built and endowed her almshouses, and found it necessary to have a resident chaplain, is it to be wondered at that she selected for the office a man whose sorrows had made a deep impression

heart, and whose unaffected piety and purity of mind were so well known to her? Mutual esteem and respect for each other's character led to an union of the hands of those whose hearts had long been joined together. Under these circumstances it was that Mrs. Wrightly became Mrs. Lauderley.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

After hearing the adventures of the
lain and his excellent wife, the *ex-v*
Wrightly, I confess that I was anxious
to renew my acquaintance with the latter
to be introduced to the former. My friend
Jonathan Sternpost, promised to gratify
wishes on the following day after he had
that every body and every thing was going
properly at the farm. He also promised
his lady should join the party, which re-
many of my fears of being accounted
being for leaving her so much to herself
running away with her husband, who
could not endure should be long out
sight, although they had been married

man one year. Having made this agreement, we took our nightcaps—not cotton nor woollen ones—and sought our beds.

I do not think Jonathan was scolded for sitting up later than usual that night, as I heard a sweet, kind voice say, as I parted from him at his chamber-door, “I hope you have been entertaining your friend, and enjoying yourself, my love;” instead of a salutation which I once heard addressed to a married friend by his wife under similar circumstances—“Oh, it is you, *at last*, is it? I wish you had stayed up all night.”

I thought that very severe and very queer at the time, as the parties had made what is called a love-match, and taken the trouble to go all the way to Gretna to get married;—but then I did not know the world so well as I do now.

The *moulin-au-vent* “sat lightly on my bosom’s throne,” if that is the *poetic* for stomach; and only excited my brain sufficiently to produce a degree of incipient apoplexy, calculated to ensure a sound and sonorous sleep. I awoke in the morning

with a confused mixture of ideas of seaside towns with useless marriages within them, lawyers' houses of red green shutters, boarding-schools for ladies, with convenient drawing-rooms, furnished with love-escapes and fire-escapes, and grammar-schools for boys labouring under measles, whooping-cough, scarlatina, and other catchable and malarious disorders. To these phantom brain were added visions of ill-used and famed head-masters, unreasonable and deceitful servant-maids, and dying secretaries. "Putting this and that together as some old ladies say who are so addicted to the vernacular in their conversations, I recovered the thread of the narrative which I had heard overnight, and which had been pretty considerably ravelled by my heavy sleep.

A sharp run down to the brook, a plunge in its cool, brilliant waters, restored me to all the few senses of which I was naturally possessed, or, as an attorney might say, "Of which I stand seized."

Breakfast—that “sure test of a virtuous mind,” as a medical friend of mine calls it, was not over so soon as it might have been, and we not had an accompaniment obligatory on the shape of the London newspaper to play with our bacon, kidneys, and other relishes. However, the broiled fish came at last, the terminus of our meal; and as my friend Jonathan threw the bones to the cat, and vilely running, said, *fin-is coronat oh! puss*, he rose from the table, and set out on his walk to the farm, accompanied by the reader’s very humble servant, who, like a well-bred pointer, kept “at heel” without any fear of being ordered to “make a point” of stopping by a pe-ho!

There is something to me very delightful in accompanying a respected—I might in this case say, a beloved—master over his farm among his labourers. It is a cheering sight to see them smile gladly on his approach, and, touching their hats as politely as they know how to do it, bid him good day, and remark upon the weather, the prospects of the season, and the work on which they are engaged. It

reminds me of those good old days recollect in my youth, "when George was (*not*) king;" when gentlemen communicate with their tenants and through the medium, not an *acromat*, a lawyer and a bailiff. Then all paid an interest in the land that they till. The landlord's eye was over his tenant labourer. He took care that the tenant not pay too much for his farm, and the latter was not paid too little for his labour. The tenant felt that the eye of his master was upon him, and did the best for himself, and the labourer knew that, if oppressed by his master, he had an appeal to the justice of the soil, and a ready means of redress for his own grievances.

Now—but I must "take heed," as the keepers say to straying spaniels, or as the lawyers get involved in an interminable discussion of agriculturals, and, to resuscitate a dead subject, Joseph, that worn-out *toe-pic* the country. All I mean to say is, that gentlemen have no landed interest," as they are called, and they do not take much interest in the

except what accrues from it in the shape of returns on the principal laid out in its purchase, generally employ a professional man to let their farms, and let their tenants employ their labourers at the lowest possible wages. Mind, I say generally—there are many glorious exceptions, though among them I do not rank those would-be-thought agriculturists, who play at farming on a model farm, worked by a clever bailiff, and exhibit prizes which they have gained by showing cattle, fattened on mangel-wurzel, swedes, or turnips, under the directions of a hireling, trained to the trade in some other county, and on which trade he gets quite as fat as the oxen or sheep he fattens.

My worthy host, Sternpost, farms one of his farms—do not smile, Mr. Londoner, the term is correct—farms one of his farms himself. It is true that he employs what the villagers call a Bailey under him; but then he, the said Bailey or Bailiff, is merely an old experienced labourer, who has the additional sum of three shillings weekly above the wages given to those whom he overlooks, and who does as much, if not more, than they do.

He consults his master daily, or, rectly, eveningly, on the work to be the following morning. During the tation, he does not scruple to differ from his master, if he sees occasion nor does he offend his master by though sometimes, as I have myself he is called an "old fool" for the he entertains. He does not turn uses his best endeavours to prove t body has proved himself a greater the "old fool." The labourers, on sions, favour the views of their the bailey, according to their judgment are generally rewarded for their part by an extra allowance of cider, which prefer in that quarter of our island Barleycorn's heavier and headier tip

In my ramble with my friend on ing in question, I heard one little which I cannot refrain from relating

We found old Richard, the ba wheat-stubble, watching the team ploughed it up.

"Well, Richard," said the mas

and works well, and I think, instead of letting it lie fallow, I shall try this new scheme, and sow it with turnips."

"Ha! ha! ha! dang it but that's a good notion," said Richard, slapping his right thigh; "what wil't try next, I wonder? Sow *turmut*s in autumn—well—well—they'll come up though, I dare say—some time in the course of next year."

"You obstinate old fool!—the plan has been tried and succeeded—at least, so the papers say," said Jonathan.

"Papers—ha! ha! ha! dang it, but that's a better notion than t'other—a deal a printing chap must know about turmut-sowing," replied Richard, appealing by a look to the ploughman who stood by, and who seemed to smile as if he thought that the bailey was a much wiser man than his master—in this matter, at least.

"Well, you pig-headed fellow, I insist upon its being tried, and on this five-acre piece," said the master.

"Oh, of course, if you *insists* it *must* be done—of course—and it don't much matter

to I—you'll have to pay for it," replied the bailiff.

"And I have a very great mind to try another new plan—of sowing salt with the turnip-seed. They say it makes a good manure if it is done judiciously."

Old Richard eyed his master as he said this, and after a minute replied,

"I've another notion, master—sow salt with the mutton, too, and then you'll only have to turn the crop to have a good dinner any day of the year—mutton and turmuts—and all ready salted."

Having delivered himself of this suggestion, he burst into a loud laugh, in which the parson, the men, ploughboys, master, and myself all joined.

I found that the bailiff at last consented to sow the turnip-seeds, but positively refused to sow a grain of salt with them.

Ignorant as I am in farming matters, I do not know that the system of stubble-turning after wheat has proved very successful. I believe that salt has been used profitably as a manure.

And talking of ignorance in farming

s, I must take permission to relate an instance of it displayed by a lady friend of mine, who, having spent the greater part of her life in London, retired into the country to pass the remainder of her days.

The back of her cottage looked upon a farm-yard, in which was a pond, the favourite resort of a fine brood of white ducks. When she saw the owner one day inspecting the growth of his brood, she hurried down the garden, calling to him over the hedge, told him she should feel much obliged to him to let her have one of the ducks when they were grown into geese, for her Michaelmas dinner."

"Bless you, marm, ducks is ducks, and never grows into geese," said the farmer.

"Well, I am surprised at that," said the lady, "for I *know* that chickens grow into geese."

"That's true enough, marm; so do babbies to men and women; but ducks don't grow into geese any more than mice do to rats, or parasols to umbrellas," added the farmer, delighted at showing his superiority over a nunner. But I am erratic, as usual.

Well, Jonathan and I, having traversed the farm in all directions, returned to the almshouse to change our dress, and prepare for the almshouse.

Mrs. Sternpost was ready to join us for a walk, and the children were to accompany us as far as the terrace, where their dinner was provided for them in the summer room, which the reader of my previous numbers may recollect was a favourite resort of the family. We converted the middle of the double-barrelled one on this occasion into a luncheon while the ladies made their dinner.

I like dining with children where they have been well tutored, and have not smug faces and hands addicted to picking and choosing every thing within their reach. They are so to enjoy every thing so much, and make so many attempts at imitating company manners, so very amusing.

There were but two little Sternposts, a boy and a girl. They had been brought up under their mother's superintendence, and were perfect models of neatness and infan-

riety. There was no necessity for mamma to chide, and papa to look sour at their raising floatsoms and jetsoms, by shipwrecking glasses of wine, and upsetting plates of meat and pudding. They seemed satisfied with what was placed before them, and branched their little forks and spoons after a most laudable fashion. They nodded their curly heads to us all, and drank to our good healths most becomingly. I was really quite delighted, and, as I showed my delight in my countenance, of course papa and mamma were delighted also.

After this little treat, the children were allowed to play about the terrace with their nurse, while he walked on to the object of our excursion.

Upon seeing the almshouse for the second time, I thought it looked more charming and comfortable than it did on my first view of it. The day of our visit, though an autumnal one, was bright and warm. The leaves had not yet fallen from the trees of the woods, but had resumed that variety of tints which renders the scenery, in the fall of each year, so

very beautiful. The evergreens, which had been planted on the common around the building, formed an agreeable relief to the sear and yellow leaves of the surrounding woods. They reminded me of that green age which succeeds to a virtuous youth, and seemed to be in keeping with the building designed for the refuge of those who, in old life, though clouded with sorrows, pray to terminate in comfort and in heartfelt thankfulness to Him who had at last rewarded their suffering goodness.

While these thoughts were coursing through my mind, we had nearly reached the lodges. The one on the right hand was occupied by an aged man and his wife, the latter of whom performed the office of housekeeper as deputy to her husband, who was a cripple and unable to move except upon crutches. The other, on the left hand side, was the residence of the gardener, who was an aged man, and his son, who assisted him in his not very arduous duties.

As we drew near, the porter, or portress, to be more correct, threw open the gate.

admit us; and her aged eyes seemed to sparkle with somewhat of their earlier fire, as she smiled on the squire and his lady, and bid them welcome. To me she curtesied very respectfully, but somewhat stiffly, for I was a stranger in the land.

Her dress was neatness itself. It consisted of a gown of dark-gray stuff, a milk-white apron, a starched and crimped collar, and a mob-cap, trimmed with dark ribbons. Over this she wore a bonnet of the species that used, in my boyish days, to be called a poke.

I took these observations while the old woman was inquiring after the health of the squire and squiress, and their little ones, and was answering questions relative to the health of herself and her good man.

These queries being duly put and replied to, she left us with a deep curtesy, and promised that her crippled husband should be out in his great chair, ready to pay his respects to his patron on our return.

The aged gardener and his son next presented themselves to our notice, and the same ceremonies were performed, only with a shade

less garrulity on the part of the dependant but then women, we are told—I cannot but for or contradict the fact—are more talkative than the stronger sex. A “thank you, William, for the *Pyracanthus* you sent me,” and an invitation to the house whenever he was inclined to go down and look at the hothouses and flower-gardens, terminated our colloquy with the gardeners.

They had accompanied us to the door of the chaplain’s lodgings, pointing out to us the beauty of the chrysanthemums and autumnal flowers, with which the borders were filled; and, as they turned to leave, the door was opened by Mr. and Mrs. Derley, who expressed their pleasure at seeing us, and ushered us into their small but comfortable and cheerful parlour.

This apartment was their sanctum. They were never intruded on by the widow unless they summoned them thither for any especial purpose, and then their appearance could not be considered an intrusion. It was but slightly furnished; a table for work, ladies’ work, and another for reading or

ing, a few chairs, whose seats were formed of worsted-work, the result of the labours of the pensioners, a couch similarly ornamented, and a set of book-shelves, well filled, completed the whole of its furniture and effects, with the exception of a few vases filled with culled flowers, and a few plants, growing in pots, placed in the recess formed by the window. This window was large, and of painted glass, which shed a sombre light over every thing, as the predominant colour was of that light *terra sienna* tint which may be seen in many of our cathedrals.

A few minutes sufficed for me to survey the *locus in quo* the chaplain and his lady passed many tranquil and happy hours. I then turned my attention to the occupants themselves. The chaplain, Mr. Lauderley, was "tall, thin, and gentlemanly" in person, and, of course, dressed in the colour and fashion of his order: a plain black suit, with knees, silk stockings, and buckles at the terminations of his nether garments and in his shoes. His hair was nearly grey, although he was not an old man, and slightly powdered. His forehead was

high and expansive, and his eyes were mild, pensive cast, which one sees in the older pictures of saints and martyrs. The expression of his face was serene and benignant.

Mrs. Lauderley was but little changed in appearance since I saw her last. She was very beautiful, for her beauty was in her mind, and expression more than of regular feature, and brilliancy of complexion. Her mild blue eyes seemed to harmonize with the delicacy of her pale features, and her hair, scarcely tinted with the gray of age, was smoothed over a brow as placid and untroubled as an infant's. She was dressed in the costume of her order, if I may use an expression more adapted to monastic institutions than to the little community over which she presided. The gown was of gray silk, closely to the person, surmounted by a falling collar of pure white muslin; and over that of what I call gauze, but what ladies probably call by some other and more elegant name, covered her head. The dress well became her tall and stately figure.

The mention of my name when I was introduced to her, recalled me to her recollection, and she mentioned many little circumstances that had occurred when last we met, which I had totally forgotten, but which proved to me that I had not been an unwelcome guest at the Mount, even in those my wild days, at least in her estimation.

With Mr. Lauderley, who thus heard of our former acquaintance, any thing formal in the way of introduction was unnecessary. We shook hands cordially, and with that shake seemed to have announced ourselves to each other as friends for life. I liked him, and I felt that he liked me, and that mutual feeling of goodwill is always pleasing to both parties, and puts them upon a good footing at once. We can all of us, I think, tell whether we shall like a person or not before we have been long in his company. I, at least, have seldom been deceived in my judgment of another's compatibility with myself, after a very short acquaintance with him or her. I can generally tell whether we shall amalgamate readily, or require welding, like two bits of hard

metal, before we can be made to unite bonds of sociality, not to say of amity do not think we shall amalgamate as as mercury does with the precious metal. I shun the party as soon as possible, for a great repugnance to being heated and mered, in the furnace and on the forge money, into an appearance of friendship any one whom I feel I cannot like.

This is erratic again.

"I trust," said the chaplain, "that come up to our little asylum with our friends of the Mount to share our frugality which will be in readiness for you in a few minutes."

"I think, my dear, you can hardly do it, as Mr. and Mrs. Sternpost know of fashionable hours, and that we are all rejoiced to see them, and any of their friends," said Mrs. Landерley.

I could only reply by looking to John and his lady, who understood the meaning of my look, and replied for me, the latter being the first speaker—as I think he is to be.

"Why, the simple fact is, that we have just partaken of the children's dinner on the terrace, and I suppose we sat longer than we intended, for I had no notion it was so near your dinner-hour."

"The children were very good, and our friend here seemed to enjoy his luncheon and their company so much, that time flew faster than we dreamed of," said Mrs. Sternpost.

"But you will stay with us now you are here," said Mrs. Lauderley; "and I will order a dinner for you at your usual hour."

"It will not interfere in the least with our arrangements, and you know the simplicity of our mode of living too well to dream of its inconveniencing any part of our establishment," chimed in the chaplain, looking "*do stay*," with both his eyes.

I bowed between a negative and an affirmative, to imply that I was like the perjured Sinon, *in utrumque paratus*, "to be, or not to be," a guest at the almshouse dinner-table, as the question might be decided by mine host of the Mount.

Jonathan reluctantly declined the invitation

so sincerely given, but he had business to transact before dinner, and had invited the parson to share the meal with us. Moreover, he had ordered certain little delicacies to be prepared, which were already undergoing the processes necessary to render them worthy of our notice, and indicative of his cook's proficiency in *arte culinaria*.

Mrs. Sternpost, too, voted on her husband's side. She had promised the children to turn to them on the terrace, and to drink tea with them in the nursery, as she had guessed from the orders given to the cook that so much good eating would require a stronger liquid than infusion of hyssop to render good digestion sure.

The chaplain and his lady looked disappointed. Jonathan and his wife had both pressed them to preside at their table, and pretend to eat with the ladies, and then to come down and make a real meal on Mount Whistling. This plan was not feasible, as sundry little arrangements had been entered into for the evening, which could not be superseded without causing disappointment.

to the greater part of the establishment over which they presided.

What reply could we make to such an assurance? None. We came to the determination of compensating for the disappointment common to us all which we had experienced this day, by dining at the almshouse at their early hour of three on the morrow.

Thus ended my first visit to the Widows' Almshouse. Like many a scene in human life, it began in joy and hope, and ended in disappointment.

As we quitted the precincts of the almshouse we found the old porter seated at the gate to greet us. Jonathan shook him kindly by the hand, and inquired after his ailments and infirmities. Mrs. Sternpost put certain questions to him, touching the qualities of certain broths and jellies which had been sent up to him from the Mount, and the efficacy of sundry cordial drinks in relieving pain and promoting rest, which had been furnished from the same bounteous quarter. As the old man raised his hat to reply, I thought I had never seen so fine a head, or so majestic

a face in my life—certainly not belonging to a figure so completely at variance with his. He was literally bent double, and his head appeared to be wasted away, and totally unable to support the weight of his upper body. His shoulders were broad, his arms long, and his chest expansive. Below all was a pair of hands and shrivelled, and he seemed to have a command over his lower extremities. The tone of his voice was deep and sonorous, and his eyes, for an old man, were clear and brilliant.

After Mrs. Sternpost had ascertained his little wants, and promised to satisfy them, we took our leave, and returned to the children, who were romping on the terrace. Their mother was engaged with the friend and I walked homeward. I took the opportunity of our being alone together to question him as to the cause of the ailments. His reply led to a little history, which I shall devote a chapter.

CHAPTER XXIX.

In the wood, immediately above the terrace, whence, as I have said, the splendid view of the Severn and its banks was gained, and not very far from the common on which the almshouse was built, stood a cottage, which had been for many years occupied by the gamekeeper of the Mount Whistling estates.

About thirty years before the period of this my visit to the Mount, and in the lifetime of my friend's father, the Admiral, this cottage was occupied by William Gurden, who was the head-gamekeeper. He was a tall, powerful, resolute man, strongly attached to his master and his interests, and not given to that vice so common to those of his calling—

tippling in the alehouse. After his were performed, the principal coverts were the vermin-traps set or examined, and the dogs fed or exercised, Gurden's time passed in rearing tame animals, and in shooting specimens of rare birds, which he shot himself, or which were brought to him from various quarters. He was very skilful in the pleasing art, and added considerably to his wages by working at it for the neighbouring gentry. Gurden could read too, and had a small library of books, principally treating on his favourite subject—natural history. Having these resources within himself, he never found his time hang heavy on his hands, and never felt inclined to visit the village house, or even the servants' hall, except on "high days and holidays," as at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, when all the *ployés* on the estate were expected to be, and spend the day at the Mount.

As the inhabitants of the little parsonage, which the Mount stood over, were almost all them labourers on the estate, Gurden had little or no trouble in preserving the

as far as they were concerned. Indeed, they were expected to assist him, if he should at any time need their assistance. The enemies to his pheasants, partridges, and hares, came from a distance, and sometimes in very formidable bodies. On these occasions he would summon his master's tenants and their labourers, and arming them with sticks only—for he never allowed them to carry fire-arms—would present such a numerous and powerful phalanx to the poachers, that they generally retired without a struggle.

Though thus merciful to his enemies, Gurdan was not popular with those who ought to have been his friends—his fellow-labourers on the estate. He held himself aloof from them, and never joined them in the cricket-ground, or in the skittle-alley, and seldom exchanged a word with them, except upon the duties in which he was engaged at the time.

I believe that all the lower orders of country-people are born with the organ of poaching strongly developed. If they do not or dare not poach themselves, they always sympathize

with those that do, and look upon a man much as a flock of sheep do on a shepherd-dog—as a necessary but odious guardian.

The labourers on the Mount Whistling were not exempted from this feeling; although they would have supported their keeper, and assisted him if he had been attacked, yet they would not have informed him of where a *single* snare was set, or a field-gate netted. They thought it all to catch a hare or two now and then; but the squire did not think so. He had a discharge, and he did it without showing favour or affection. If he found one of his fellow-labourers in the act of snaring or poaching, he took away his poaching implements and warned him, that if he caught him a second time engaged in the same way, he should take him up before his master, or some other magistrate in the neighbourhood. It was easily to be conceived that he was not a popular man. Many would have quarrelled with him in hopes of getting him to fight, but he never gave them an opportunity, for he

frequented those haunts where such exhibitions generally take place—the pothouse, and the gossiping corner of the village.

Whether Gurden found his cottage, hidden as it was in the woods, and at a distance from the habitations of his fellow-men, dull and lonely, or whether he deemed it a duty to seek a helpmate meet for him, I cannot pretend to say. It is certain that he visited the daughter of a little farmer, at the bottom of the hill, between his cottage and the banks of the river, and, after a few weeks, was her acknowledged sweetheart.

Gurden had a rival, a tall, powerful fellow, who lived at a small public-house, kept by his father, just on the borders of the marshes, and close to the Severn's bank. He earned his livelihood by fishing, and shooting wild fowl, in the winter; and, although the Row-
barge, as the house was called, did not boast of a license to sell spirits, there was generally a good supply of hollands and brandy to be had whenever Giles Handley returned from what he called “a trip to the deep sea fishery.”

Long before William Gurden had "out," as "popping the question is called in this part of the country, Mary Handley fully made up her mind not to marry her cousin Giles; and in this resolution she was supported by her father, who looked upon her brother and his nephew as bad men, and dangerous characters, and exactly the reverse of the keeper, whose proposal for his daughter's hand he gladly accepted.

Old Handley and his son Giles had been keepers, not only because he was a good man, but because he never drank in their neighbourhood, never joined in the games and gambles which were ried on there, and had, upon more than one occasion, warned them of the danger they were incurring by harbouring bad characters of all kinds, and encouraging smuggling and poaching. This feeling was not diminished when they heard that he was the accepted suitor of Mary Handley. Giles really loved her, if he could be said to love any woman, and his father was anxious that he should marry her, for two reasons; the principal one was to annoy his brother, who

steady, honest, sober man, and spoke openly of his disapproval of the goings-on at the Rowbarge; the other was that Mary, the only child of her father, would have a hundred pounds or more for a dowry, which he thought would prove very serviceable in recruiting the damaged forces of his family.

By his father's advice, Giles sought an opportunity to see his cousin, and make one more effort to prevail on her to marry him instead of the keeper. He had been forbidden to enter the house of his uncle, and felt no inclination to do so. He knew that Mary might be found at certain hours in the poultry-yard, or the orchard, and that when his uncle was gone down into the grounds he could converse with her uncontrolled. He felt nervous and irritable at the notion of being refused, as he felt he should be; and, to give him courage and allay his irritability, he took several glasses of strong spirits before he set off to the farm, which was about two miles from the public-house, and midway between it and the keeper's cottage.

By keeping behind the hedgerows, he

"I own that I have done such Mary; but I swear here before...."

"Hush! hush! name not Him Mary.

"I swear," continued Giles, "by a good and holy, that I will leave o ing—will never gamble or smuggle you will but be mine, and let thi return whence he came."

As he said these words, Giles towards his cousin, and, in spite of tempts to avoid it, got possession of Mary did not shrink from her former bearing, but slowly and distinctly the words she had used before, and assuring him that no arguments he would diminish the love she felt for Gurden.

"By Heaven! then," said Giles, throwing his arm round her waist cowardly spy shall have a hunt for her and when he finds her he may wish it had ended differently."

Mary gave one frightful scream powerful cousin bounded through a

the orchard with her in his arms, as though she had been an infant, and rushed with her towards the wood that covered the side of the hill. Horrorstruck at the dreadful fate she felt certain awaited her, unless some one came to her assistance, for a few seconds she felt quite powerless.

Just as she reached the skirt of the covert, she collected her strength, and uttered a cry so shrill, that Giles paused in his career to see if she were hurt. Mary had fainted; and, as he laid her on a bank and stood over her, Giles fancied she was dead. Fear and horror succeeded to passion and lust in his mind; his knees trembled under him, and he was about to fall by the side of his injured cousin, when he felt a heavy hand upon his shoulder, and a voice, which he knew to be the keeper's, demanded of him the meaning of what he saw.

Giles did not answer. The two strong men gazed steadily at each other for a time, but at length the eyes of him who felt he had done wrong quailed and sunk beneath the gaze of the other.

gained the wall of the homestead unseen, crept round it to a spot whence, without being seen himself, he could see all that was passing about the premises. He had watched long before he saw his 'uncle' lead his pony to ride off in the direction of the cow-grounds.

* Shortly after he had ridden out of the garden he saw Mary cross the garden and go into the orchard to put up the chickens for the night, as he was aware she usually did at that hour.

To follow her was the work of a moment. Mary started when she saw him standing before her. The colour rushed to her cheeks and with indignant tones she demanded, "What business brought him there, and how dared he to insult her by his presence?"

"I am not come to insult you," said Giles. "I am here to entreat you to listen to me once again. You know I love...."

"Giles Handley," said Mary, placing her hands before her, as if repelling some

ject, "I will not listen to one word you have to say on that hateful subject."

Giles felt every vein in his body tingle as the blood rushed through them. His head seemed to throb violently, and his eyes as if they would burst from their sockets. He did not speak; but, after gazing on her for a few minutes, he advanced as if to take her hand.

"Stand back—stand back, Giles—touch me not. You know that I am no longer my own mistress. My hand is promised to another," said Mary.

"Yes, I *do* know it," said Giles, grinding his teeth, and shaking his fist in the direction of the keeper's cottage—"I *do* know it. You have preferred Will Gurden—the proud, overbearing spy—to your own kinsman. Curse him!"

"William is not a spy, nor is he proud and overbearing; you only say so because he will not keep company with such as you, who are drinking and gambling all day, and smuggling or poaching all night," said Mary.

father, but, coming up to Gurden, he with most awful oaths, that he would revenge upon him if he were hanged.

Gurden smiled, and bid him to do his worst.

The parties then separated. Giles went to the public-house, and the keeper notified Mary and her father to their home.

Within one week from that day, Gurden came home in his fishing-vessel — a small boat of about fifteen tons burden — and stopped at Posset Point, as it is sounded by the bell, though written Port's Head, and then proceeded up the Avon towards Bristol. The vessel was met the same evening, and landed a despatch of ruffians, armed with fowling-pieces, on the beach near the Rowbarge.

The night was fine and clear. Gurden looked out of the casement-window of his cottage, and listened for any suspicious sounds in the woods about him. All was still, not even a branch moved. He closed the window, and, having looked at his watch, extinguished the light, undressed himself, and went to bed.

It was then eleven o'clock. Gurden had sat up so late, but he had been sup-

Mary and his father-in-law "that was to be." The time passed so agreeably, that he had not the heart to tear himself from her who had promised to become his wife within the month. Thinking of Mary, and laying plans for the future, kept him awake for some time—indeed, until he heard the stable-clock at the Mount strike twelve.

He turned on his side, and closed his eyes to try and sleep, that he might be up in time to go his early rounds in the morning. He had succeeded in getting into that delightful dreamy state which precedes a sound sleep, when he was roused by the report of a gun in the direction of the home preserves, a covert between his cottage and the Mount.

He sprung up and dressed himself as quickly as he could ; but, while in the act, he heard several more shots fired, which convinced him that a large party was out.

Before he went down to the farm and into the village to rouse the labourers, he determined to inspect the party, and ascertain their numerical strength as nearly as he could ; for this purpose, taking a strong short stick in his

hand as a defence, he went down the bank, entered the covert, where the guns were to be heard, behind the party shooting. He crept into a dry ditch, which ran through the midst of the preserves, and crawled along on his hands and knees. He quickly reached a spot where the poachers were shooting at pheasants from their perching-places, and counted eleven men so engaged.

As he was about to turn round, and to take the best of his way for help, he found himself seized by two powerful men, one of whom caught his arm as he struck at him, and the other, pering the name of "Mary," hit him square over the head.

He struggled with his foes, but in vain. A second blow struck him on the temple, and he was senseless. He knew of nothing that was going on around him for nearly a fortnight; and when he recovered it was to find himself in the Mount, with Mary sitting by his side. He had been cruelly beaten, and left for dead by the poachers, who had filled their pockets with game, and retreated undiscovered.

Gurden might have died in the ditch.

he was left had it not been for his master, the Admiral, who was at the Mount at the time. He had heard several shots fired in the night, and, not doubting but that he should have to send some half-dozen poachers to gaol in the course of the day, thought that the sooner the job was over, the better. So soon as morning dawned, he "turned out," and sought the steward's room, fully expecting to see that temporary receptacle for rogues and vagabonds full of poachers and keeper's assistants. No one was there, and no one was up in the house; so the Admiral took his stick and walked up to the keeper's, to ascertain what had been done with the poachers.

A little spaniel that the keeper had had under his care to cure of the distemper trotted behind him; and, as they passed through the covert that had been the scene of the affray on the previous night, the dog began whimpering and running on the trail of something.

This rather astonished the Admiral, as the dog had been broken not to follow game of any kind. He whistled, and called, "Rover! Rover!" but Rover would not come back.

Suddenly he heard the dog dash through bushes and utter a sharp bark, and a mournful howl.

Thinking that the poor little thing had fallen into a gin, or run against a dog-spear, the keeper followed it, and found it howling and licking the face of his keeper, whom he regarded upon as a dead man.

As soon as he could find any of the crew, the Admiral sent them to the spot, and ordered them to carry the wounded man down to the Mount and put him to bed.

Here, as we have seen, he was attended by Mary, who refused to quit his side.

When William Gurden was sufficiently recovered to give an account of what had happened to him, every means was used to discover the perpetrators of the savage attack without success. Giles Handley had been in the country in a barque bound for Jamaica, but there was no clue whatever to the real party.

Gurden's good constitution and sobriety rendered his recovery less tedious than it otherwise would have been. As soon as he was

well, he was married to Mary Handley, and every thing went on as usual, excepting that the Admiral, before he left England, insisted upon it that a regular under-keeper should be appointed, and placed in a newly-built cottage near to Gurden's, to be ready to assist him in case of emergency.

It is true that the reason he assigned to the head-keeper for this act was, that "married women did not like their husbands to be out at night."

For two years nothing occurred to interfere with the peace and happiness of Gurden and his wife. The under-keeper, a strong, active, and willing fellow, relieved his superior of much of his unpleasant duty, and poachers seemed to be afraid to venture near the Mount Whistling preserves.

One night, in the depth of winter, when the snow lay deep upon the ground, the under-keeper called Gurden from his supper, and told him that he feared something wrong was going on, as he had tracked the footsteps of two men in the snow across the covert to the keeper's garden-gate. It was evident that

they were not the footsteps of labour, the marks showed that the soles of the shoes were without nails, or iron tips.

Gurden went to the gate, and examined the prints of the shoes, and corroborated the suspicions of his under-keeper, that stranger had been on the spot. He bid him go home, not to undress, and to come to him immediately, in case he heard any thing to report to him.

About midnight, Mary woke her husband and told him that she was sure she had heard voices in dispute near the under-house, and thought she had heard blows and the sounds of a struggle.

Gurden leaped from his bed, threw open the casement, and distinctly heard the cry of a person endeavouring to call for assistance. He dressed himself as speedily as he could, and, followed by Mary, went to the door, where he saw his assistant struggling with two men in night-dresses, who had nearly overpowered him. They were striking him with heavy sticks at his head and face.

Gurden threw himself on the nearest ruffian, and hurled him some distance from the spot. The other fellow, seeing his companion attacked, left the beaten man, and prepared to defend himself against the keeper.

Only a few blows had been exchanged, when the first ruffian took up a gun, and, coming behind Gurden, discharged it at his back, within three inches of his body.

The keeper fell to the ground; and Mary, who had shouted to warn her husband of his threatened danger, but in vain, threw herself on the murderer, as she thought him, and, in spite of all his attempts to release himself from her, clung to him with a firm determination to hold him until he could be secured by the under-keeper.

When the villain loosed both her hands, she fixed her teeth on his jacket, and did not loose her hold until the jacket gave way, and she was struck to the ground with a portion of it remaining in her mouth.

The under-keeper tried to seize the man, but he fled after his companion, and he was too weak to follow in pursuit, and unwilling to leave Gurden and his courageous wife.

"William Gurden and his wife are the whom you saw to-day at the lodge of the Widows' Almshouse," said Jonathan post. "His recovery was most wonderful. The charge entered like a ball, from the vicinity of the gun when it was fired; it traversed the side, and came out in front. The shock, however, to the nervous system caused paralysis of the lower extremities, and he lived for years the wreck you saw him. I need hardly say that the Admiral never allowed him to want for any thing, and Mrs. Lauderley gladly acceded to the request expressed by himself and his wife to reside in the asylum, and attend daily service in the chapel."

"And the man who fired the shot," said
"was, I presume, Giles Handley?"

"He was, the cowardly wretch! He was taken and hanged, as he deserved, and the piece of cloth that Mary tore from his jacket in the struggle removed all doubts of his identity. The under-keeper, who was first attacked, we believe with a view to get Gurden out of his house—is now my keeper, and will

you the story of the affray better than I can. So now for Mrs. Sternpost's drawing-room, where the parson is waiting to be summoned to dinner."

CHAPTER XXX.

The horrible story of the keeper's incident cost me an almost sleepless night. I did doze off, it was only to dream of struggles, fearful imprecations, and wounds, mingled with the screams of a I trembled and tossed about in bed, and being restless, began to grow feverish and excited. The clothes felt like a mountain, and my pillow seemed transformed into a paving-stone. I rose and walked about the room, until I felt not only cool, but cheerful, then crept into my bed only to spring out again, when my fever returned fiercer than ever. I threw on my dressing-gown, lit a candle, and tried to read. It would have been a combination of the letters

alphabet, the page presented to my view the poor crippled old man and his faithful, loving wife, as I had seen them on the previous day. I turned to another page, but there they were still. I tried to look at the pictures—for the book was illustrated—but my overcharged or overheated imagination converted a comic scene of Mr. Cruikshank's into the struggle in the coppice, and made the faces of the combatants resemble that face—that fearful face—of Fagin in Newgate.

I threw the book away in despair, and made up my mind never to listen to a horrible tale or a ghost story after dinner again. I resolved, too, to be a peripatetic for the remainder of the night. In the midst of my wanderings from the head of the bed to the opposite window and back again, it suddenly occurred to me that I had once been told by Mr. Abernethy, that every thing wrong might be referred to a disordered state of the stomach, and that I might *possibly* have exceeded in supplying the “loss of vitality,” either in solids or fluids, upon this memorable occasion.

I resorted to the contents of a bottle which I keep on my bed-room shelf, whether at home or abroad. A teaspoonful of the powder in a wine-glass of cold water gave me immediate relief. I "turned in again," as seamen say, and fell into a calm, refreshing sleep, interrupted by an *ὄναρ ἐκ Διός*.

I am all for "the diffusion of useful knowledge," and never like to withhold anything that I think will benefit my fellow-men. In proof of this, I may remind those who have done me the honour of reading my works, that I have incurred the deep displeasure of the Oxford sausage-makers, for having made known the mysteries of their craft; that I have been abused by several farm-house cooks for having betrayed the secrets of the mode of making and turing black or hogs' puddings, and that I have been upon by sundry spouses for having taught my husbands how to escape the punishment attendant on "potations pottle deep." I have also a shocking bad headache.

In spite of all these disagreeables, my philanthropic feelings urge me to give my favourite recipe for removing the

santries of imperfect digestion, or the acidity caused by a slight overdose of fermented liquors. The men may call me a *quack* if they please ; I care no more for that than I do for being called a “ dear little *duck* ” by the ladies. Without further preface, here is the recipe :

“ Carbonate of magnesia and carbonate of soda, of each one ounce ; powdered ginger, one drachm ; and best Turkey rhubarb, half a drachm.”

Let the druggist mix these ingredients carefully together in a mortar, and put them into a bottle furnished with a glass stopper. The dose is about half a teaspoonful, and it is so innocuous, that, as the advertisements say, “ the most delicate female may take it with impunity,” and “ it is warranted to keep well in any climate.”

I might have sold this invaluable medicine under the name of “ Peter Priggins’s Peptic Powders,” at ten and threepence a bottle, stamp included, and realized a fortune by them ; but I prefer the interests of the public at large to my private interests, and to

going to an enormous expense for
ments.

Well, I slept soundly, and rose a
hour. I presume that Phœbus Apollo
same, and mounted the box of his
chariot at the regular time; that
thonged Phlegon, punished Pyroei
fly off Eous's ear, and talked to Æ
enigmatical language peculiar to
coachmen — I say I presume all th
an unphilosophical observer might
tained doubts on the subject from
and murkiness of the morning.

If Phœbus were smoking a clo
smoking a most extensive one, for
covered the face of the sky. If A
smoking, he was also indulging i
filthy habit, said to be practised up
casions by our friends across the
for, on opening my window, I fou
was "*spitting* with rain," as they
Somersetshire, when it does not
pour down in torrents. Every thi
very wretched. The trees hung d
heads. The sparrows could not

could the peacock look proud. I shut down the window with a sigh, and shaved myself to the tune of "Water parted from the Sea," in five flats. Then I sought my host and hostess, and my morning meal.

Much as you may wish it, you cannot make a breakfast last for ever. We prolonged the meal as long as we conveniently could, and then Jonathan left me to be very busy in the steward's room, and his lady departed to set the domestic machines going in the nursery and kitchen.

I was alone with my newspaper, and made the most of it. I read it slowly and deliberately, from the title and date to the printer's and publisher's names and addresses. I then meditated on what I had read—then built *chateaux en Espagne*—then tried to read a book, but could not. I then did nothing but walk to the window and gaze on the clouds, wondering whether I should ever see the "blue above" again.

This was so awfully monotonous, that I had serious doubts whether it would not be far preferable to go either raving or melancholy

mad; but I have a decided distaste for indulging in monomaniaism, and no share the luxuries of Bedlam with the constitutional shooters on Constitutional. I adopted a wiser plan than that of myself to the cross-questionings empanelled to inquire into my sanity.

I rang the bell *twice*, to the great annoyance of mine hostess, who sent the nurse down to inquire who the impertinent individual was who had ventured to give a sonic sign for bringing down the nurse. I bribed the girl with a new shilling, and persuaded her mistress to intrust little time to me for a few minutes.

I love to play with children, and in the accomplishment of my own business I succeeded in playing at marbles. My knees ached, much to the satisfaction of my partner, and greatly to the detriment of my knees of my trousers and the knees of the person. An unfortunate slip of the foot caused a bump upon the head of the partner, and a discoloration of the cut

above his left eye. I need hardly say, that he did not stand the blow without giving tongue. He roared most frightfully, and I was not sorry to see his mamma enter, and, after giving me *such* a look, order him up to his nursery, where he would not be subjected to such *very* rough usage.

The necessity imposed upon me of apologizing for my injurious treatment of the heir to the honours and fortunes of Mount Whistling was really a relief to me, and I made up my mind to repeat the ill-usage of a child upon the very first occasion on which I found myself dull in a country-house. As to the lady's insinuations, and the child's shyness at playing with me afterwards, I did not care a new coin—a half-farthing—for them. I had killed *ennui*, and I was a happy murderer.

The time arrived for setting out for the almshouse, but as to walking there through the woods, as we had intended, it was quite out of the question; for no umbrella that was ever invented would have sustained the weight of the rain that was falling. No shooting-shoes — not even India-rubber boots — could

have secured us dry feet across the river. The question was put to defer our journey till the next day, but not one assent could be obtained. The motion was seconded, for every one knew that the rain, if carried, would have caused much inconvenience. Who could disappoint Laura's wife, and six most worthy and deserving widows?

What was to be done? We could not go on horseback, and, as to going in the carriage, John Trot, the coachman, would have been blue at his master for some weeks. Mr. Trot suggested such a thing as having Mr. Trot and Poppet out in so heavy a rain, which he might probably have abdicated the reins, which he had sat an absolute master of for some thirty years, had such a proposal been made to him. No, that would not do. William, the footman, cut the gordian knot of difficulties, by recommending the *blunderbuss*, as he was pleased to call it, a cart with a covered head, which had been christened an omnibus.

William rose some half-dozen

estimation of his master and mistress for the suggestion. An old horse, who was used to all sorts of vehicles, weather, and roads, was soon harnessed, and we were stowed away in the comfortable carriage which bid defiance to rain and wind, and rough, rutty roads. We were obliged to make a considerable *détour* to gain the almshouse, as there was no carriage-road by the terrace through the wood. Our way lay along a newly made drive, and, as the system founded by Mr. M'Adam, of breaking the stones into small pieces, had not been adopted in the highways and byways of Somersetshire, we had an opportunity of testing the stability of the springs of the omnibus, and the compactness of our thews and sinews. The jolting did us a great deal of good. It made us laugh heartily, and drove away the remains of the melancholy caused by that very gloomy morning.

At length the summit of the hill was reached, and we turned off the rough, rocky road on to the smooth, soft turf of the common. The contrast put one in mind of what

one used to experience in London, hackney-coach, in which one travels "off the stones." A short quarter brought us to our destination; and, when the door of the omnibus was opened, and we stepped to the ground, I was amazed to find myself standing on dry earth, with a bright sun above me, shining from a cloudless sky. The clouds were, in fact, above the clouds, were hanging in dense masses, entangled in the woods below us. The effect upon the spirits was electrical—or, I believe I may say, electro-magnetical—my heart was in my bosom, and I should certainly have shown the intoxicating effect of fine weather upon it by cutting a caper, or some other pirouette, had not the appearance of a poor, old, crippled keeper in his usual dress acted as a damper upon the exuberance of my joy.

To any one unaccustomed to the hill country of the West of England, our account of the gloominess and wetness of the morning we had passed would have been incredible. Our friends of the hill knew very

while they, the higher classes, were enjoying the luxuries of sunshine, we, the lower orders, were suffering from the miseries of a morn that "heavily with clouds brought on the day." They had been seriously alarmed lest our moral or physical courage should have failed us, and disappointed them of our society.

I need not describe the dinner prepared for us. It was literally a plain joint, a dish of game from the squire's, and a little pastry; but it was so well cooked, so nicely served, and so cheerfully partaken of, that I never once regretted the absence of fish, soups, and side dishes. As to the wines, when I heard the report of a champagne cork, I understood the use of a sort of washing-tub, with a cover to it, which I saw strapped on to the roof when I stepped into the omnibus. It was a large ice-pail, which Jonathan Sternpost had invented for terrace-dinners and distant picnics. He knew that the laws laid down for the government of this little community did not prohibit wine on *all* occasions; and he knew that the ladies of the almshouse,

like the rest of their sex, loved champagne, and that little cool. he joined them in their frugal benevolently filled and sent up the His benevolence was not purely rested, for he preferred champagne tled table-beer, which was the ne proach to it to be found in the cell asylum.

“ But the widows,” cries out some or impatient reader.

Well, my dear madam, or sir, with prefix, I can assure you that I never more pleasing or respectable-looking aged ladies in my life.

“ Did they look very melancholy

Melancholy! they looked perfectly and smiled—ay, and laughed too, second round of champagne.

“ Did they talk?”

How can you ask so very silly me—so very queer a question?

“ But were they pretty, or in or ...”

Patience, madam, or sir; I am

introduce you to them individually, and then I will give you the best sketch I can of the personal appearance of each of them. I can only say now that they all looked cheerful, contented, and happy. Why should they not? In this blessed retreat, they had no bills to pay, and did not know a tax-gatherer or a bum-bailiff, even by sight. A religious light was observable in their faces, and not a *dim* religious light—which is more suitable to the interior of a cathedral than to the exterior of the human countenance. I always suspect that the black drop of hypocrisy is to be found in the heart of every one who endeavours to prove his sanctity by the constant gloominess of his looks. Give me the cheerful countenance, as the best proof of a heart grateful for the blessings we receive, and submissive to the trials we must all of us undergo.

We did not sit long over our wine, but followed Mrs. Lauderley to the drawing-room, where we passed a most delightful evening. There was music, in which most of the ladies

were proficient; singing, chiefly of a religious character; there were chess and draughts for those who preferred them; and there were plenty of books, and a diligent reader in the worthy chaplain, whose cheerful companions smile on him in their work, as he read to them the varied pages of Shakspeare, and the *Prayers* there were, but they were not called for, and then only to amuse their younger friends, who visited them and then from the neighbourhood when they came to bring their contributions to the clothing-fund for the benefit of the cottagers of the parish.

I was truly sorry when, after tea and supper, the omnibus was announced and set out, under the light of an autumn moon on our return home. I need hardly say I took advantage of a *sederunt*, in which the host and I indulged after we had been to Mount, to learn the histories of the companions for the evening. These I related as they were related to me at com-

tervals, in the treasure-house of my memory, and will recount them, to the best of my poor abilities, for the benefit and amusement of my readers.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The lady who sat on my right du-
ner was introduced to me by the founder
of the asylum, who was on my left, as M.
acute. She appeared to be a few years
older than her companions, or perhaps
trials she had, in common with them,
gone, had made a deeper and more
impression upon *her* features than the
things had upon theirs. She was still so
handsome. Her complexion was brown
clear, and a dark gray eye, fringed with
silken lashes, seemed but to require
slight excitement to call forth its lar-
ge liancy. Her hair was of the colour of
ripe chestnut, but here and there a few
hairs intruded themselves. In height

not above the medium size of women. Her figure had evidently been slight in her youth, but was now somewhat fuller than strict symmetry would require. Altogether, she was in feature, expression, and general appearance, such an one as a man, sated with the frivolities and nothingnesses of showy beauties, would gladly have secured as a companion for life.

So much for the personal appearance of Mrs. Montacute, and now for her little history.

On the banks of a small stream which arose in a neighbouring hill, and hurried itself over a rocky, rugged bottom into the river Wye, stood a neat residence, a building something between a cottage and a country-house. It was called Coalbrook Cottage, from the name of the brook which ran through its grounds, and was the moving power to an immense water-wheel, connected with some iron-works which stood some few hundred yards below. Of these works and this cottage Mr. Montacute was the proprietor. He was a clever, scientific man, who had raised himself from an humble station by his attention to his busi-

ness, and by strict integrity. He had invented a method of working tinned iron, and by the aid of his former master had obtained a patent for the process, and built works adjoining the cottage in which he dwelt, and which was formerly occupied by a gentleman of small independent property. His only daughter, who bestowed herself on her little fortune on Montacute, some sixteen months after her father's death, to him she had rejected a host of suitors whom she thought, sought her hand, not for the sake of that hand alone, but for the power of which the stroke of a pen in that office could make them masters. She knew the honest uprightness of his character, and had no relations who had the wish to deprive her of the right to control her in her choice.

Within twelve months after their marriage a son was born to them, and a happier family than Mr. and Mrs. Montacute were now to be found in the county of Gloucester. The cottage of Coalbrook was the scene of his tranquil enjoyment, and the source of his bestowed charity to the neighbouring

santry, many of whom, leaving the healthier but less profitable pursuits of agriculture, became useful and clever servants at the works.

In the course of a few years, Montacute discovered another process by means of which the plates could be prepared much more speedily and at less expense than by the former, which he had himself invented, and hitherto adhered to. It required a considerable capital to alter the works, so as to bring the more recent discovery to bear. But whence was the sum required for these improvements to be obtained? Montacute had realized enough by his first invention to pay off the money advanced to him by his employer, but it had left him with barely sufficient to carry on his business, and that employer was now dead. He might have raised money on the mortgage of the cottage, or have resorted to the principal of his wife's property, but he had settled it upon her when they were married, and he resolved not to touch it, or encumber the estate. The only plan he could hit upon was to seek a partner,

who should be admitted to a share of profits upon advancing the money necessary for making the alterations, and securing a patent of the invention.

About twelve months before this person had taken up his residence in the joining borough, which I will take the liberty of calling Maythorn. This gentleman, Lowe, had been brought up in the counting-house of his father, who called himself a general agent. It so happened that the father and son differed in their views of carrying on business after the latter had been brought into partnership. The father thought the son far too bold in his speculations, and the son thought his father an old twaddler who would never be worth £20,000, and so. The result was that they agreed at a certain rate — to dissolve partnership. This was effected, and with £5000 in his pocket, Lowe left London, took a house in Maythorn, and opened a bank of issue. He might have found some difficulty in getting people to take his notes, had he been a perfect stranger in the place; but such was not the case.

had been a most active agent for the gentleman who then represented Maythorn in parliament, and by his ingenuity—to use a mild term — had succeeded in unseating the old member, a most respectable man, whose family had lived in the neighbourhood of, and represented, the borough for many years. Ernest was also ready to accommodate a customer by cashing a check or discounting a bill, and was very hospitable in his entertainments, and very liberal with the contents of his well-stocked cellar.

The result of these modes of proceeding was, that he shortly became a person of some consequence, and instead of the one boy whom he called his clerk, standing behind his counter issuing notes and doing the usual work of a country bank, while he sat perched up aloft, keeping the books, and writing to correspondents, he soon had a regular set of clerks, and merely did the speculating and looking-on part.

Ernest was not a “sleeping partner;” he was, to use a vulgarism, “wide awake.” Though his hands did not work, his head did.

He wormed himself into the heart of the lawyer in Maythorn, and through him managed to learn the means and appliances of every body who had, or was supposed to have, property in and around the borough. His knowledge enabled him to make advances for security, and saved him from giving up his quarters where he might have injured his business by an indiscreet refusal of aid when temporary aid was required.

Amongst his neighbours, Ernest had had any transactions with Montague. He could he learn any thing of the state of his affairs from his friend the lawyer, except the property on which he resided, and on which the iron-works stood, was not mortgaged, and, to the best of his knowledge and belief, was unmortgaged. How to obtain an insight into the state of things at Coalbrook Edge he did not know, as the proprietor was of so peculiar a turn of mind, and so devoted to his work, that he passed his days in the works, and his evenings at his own fireside.

He could not introduce himself at Coalbrook Edge without some pretext for doing

could he invite the owner to dine with him at one of his handsome entertainments without some sort of introduction to him. He was very anxious to effect an intimacy with Montacute, because he really believed that he could realise a very pretty property if he could get a share in the works, or a hold on the proprietor of them. It would, moreover, give stability to his credit as a banker, to be known as the joint-owner of so flourishing a concern as the Coalbrook Tinned-plate Works.

He turned the matter over and over again in his mind, but, turn it which way he would, he could see no way of effecting his object. He knew not how to get even on speaking terms with Montacute; for he knew no one who knew him, and all his money matters were transacted without having recourse to the Maythorn Bank. He felt irritated and annoyed, and almost made up his mind to introduce himself by asking permission to see the works, or on some other plea as frivolous and vexatious.

One evening, as he sat pondering over this most fruitful source of trouble to him, Ernest

Lowe heard a knock at his outer-door, his servant wished to know if he was at home, as one Mr. Montacute wished to speak to him.

It is needless to say, that Mr. Lowe was at home, and that, ere his visiter had been seated many minutes, two bottles of his best wine, with biscuits and fruit, were placed before him.

This, however, was putting himself to a useless expense, and his servant to unnecessary trouble. Montacute was not a bibber. He needed no stimulant to give him courage to make a mere business proposition, nor was he likely to make a sacrifice of his interests by suffering intoxicating drink to deprive him of his intellects. He had drunk two glasses of wine before he proceeded to make known the object of his call to the banker; and then, in a collected, straightforward manner, explained to him the nature of the invention, which he felt assured would prove very profitable, and his wish to engage some person as a partner, who could supply the capital necessary for carrying it out.

Ernest Lowe listened attentively, and

out hesitation, closed with the proposal that had been made to him. In a few days the necessary papers were prepared and signed, and the patent secured. The old works were speedily levelled to the ground, and new ones erected in their place. In a very few years additions were made to them, workmen's cottages erected, and what had been a mere handful of huts was now a large and populous village.

A change as great as had taken place in the works had been effected in the cottage, not in the building—for that remained as it had stood for years—but in the inhabitants. Mr. and Mrs. Montacute were no longer nobodies. They visited and received visitors, kept a carriage, and were on intimate terms with the neighbouring gentry, but with none so intimate as with Ernest Lowe, "the friend of the family," and partner both as banker and tinned-plate worker with Montacute under the names and titles of Lowe, Montacute, and Company. The bank was left to the senior partner to conduct it, and the junior was engaged entirely at the works.

Prosperous were they beyond their fondest

hopes ; but, as riches increased, avarice took ground in their hearts. Money was their cry — it was their God. Their influence was such in the parish of Maythorn, that, with the aid of the parson, they could return the member ; and would return no man who would not promise himself to introduce and support measures that were calculated to forward the progress of trade at the expense of agriculture. Their object was to lower the prices of provisions, so that they might lower the wages of the workmen, and so gain larger profits, and increase their fortunes more speedily. They had already adopted the truck system, and paid their “hands,” and paid their wages in bread and grocery, and even in articles of

As they had some difficulty in procuring a gentleman to represent Maythorn, who would carry out their views to the full extent, Ernest Lowe suggested that his partner should come forward, and represent the borough, rather than the iron-works, himself.

This, as Mr. Lowe expected, he did, and was doing, under the plea that he could

out great detriment to the business, absent himself from Coalbrook. Mr. Lowe, therefore, kindly undertook the M.P. ship himself, and was returned without any opposition.

He placed a responsible person in the bank, and went to reside in the mansion, formerly occupied by the family who, for so many years, had sent the member for Maythorn to Parliament, but who were now so much reduced, by many untoward circumstances, as to be obliged to dispose of the family property, and retire to some humbler and distant home.

Here Mr. Ernest Lowe "carried on the war," as he called it, most gloriously. The house was refurnished from garret to cellar. Wines of the finest vintages were purchased at the highest prices. Pictures were sent down by waggon-loads at a time. Artists and dealers were there for months, cleaning, fresh backing, and hanging them in the most favourable lights.

The library was cleared of its ponderous volumes, and left to the good taste of a first-rate bookseller, to be remodelled and fitted up after the newest fashion, and with the

most expensive modern works. There was a billiard-room and table erected, a music room furnished with harps, and fortes, and all sorts of music. In short, everybody said that Ernest Lowe had most notions, and deserved to be as rich as he was.

Out of doors the same spirit was exhibited. Hothouses for peacheries, pineries, and berries, were erected. The garden was filled with the choicest fruit-trees and flowers. The stable department was unexceptionable. In carriages, Ernest Lowe might have compared with Long Acre itself for style and value of build.

"What a capital fellow Lowe is!" said the great and demi-great who ate of his dinners, drank his choice wines, partook of his forced fruits, played at his billiards, rode his horses, and lolled in his chaises, phaetons, or britchskas. But what could the poor say? Nothing aloud. They whispered, indeed, that it was not as it was in the old time. They were employed and were paid for their labour; but where were their comforts to which the old family never

ected to attend ? Where were the blankets and warm hose, thick shoes, and comfortable cloaks and coats at Christmas ? Where were the bibles and prayer-books with which each of their children was supplied when the village schoolmaster or mistress announced the child's ability to use them ? Where were the baskets of meat, wine, and jellies for the recovering sick ? and the medicines, broths, and gruels while their illness lasted ? Gone—all gone.

The village schools were turned into dog-pennels ; and the children, as soon as they were able to clean iron plates, were sent to the works to wear out their puny frames amidst the smoke and heat of sulphureous furnaces.

The character of the population—the rising generation — was entirely altered both in appearance and in principles. The men became self-infidels and whole politicians. The women no longer revered chastity, but shared in the orgies of their husbands, and indulged in language too horrible to be recorded. Morality had fled from Maythorn—infidelity and licentiousness reigned in her stead.

Mrs. Montacute, I must say, in her, did all she could to stay the vice; but she could do but little. kind to the poor, and would have ed children had it been in her power. parents, however, cared for nothing means of indulging in their debauchery. sent their children to work as soon as they could procure them admission to the school, that they might thus add to their education, and procure an increase of their income.

Montacute himself was an altered man. He received the remarks of his wife on the immoral, condition of the children, and their ignorance of the religious obligations, with a smile which might safely have been called a sneer, and which showed that education, except in mechanic arts, was useless to them; that they could not afford to waste time, for time was money; and that his remarks, which issue from the lips of a man who worship Mammon, and look on the poor as mere instruments in his service.

The clergyman of the neighbourhood exerted himself strenuously to re-

evil which he saw was increasing; but his exertions were vain — the parents would not go to church, nor compel their children to attend the Sunday schools, which he had had enlarged to meet the necessities of a rapidly increasing population. He was unsupported by the great men of the town and neighbourhood, who seemed to think of nothing but joining in some speculation or another to enable them to compete in wealth and luxurious living with the partners of the firm of Lowe, Montacute, and Company.

The head of the firm, Mr. Earnest Lowe, was still a bachelor. He spent most of his time in London, or in a pretty little cottage on Wimbledon Common, during the sitting of the house. When the sessions were over, he returned to Maythorn Manor, accompanied, or followed in a few days, by a crowd of curious characters of both sexes. There were actors and actresses, poets and poetesses, authors and authoresses, musicians, singers, gentlemen and ladies, with no apparent means of living, wits of the first water, billiard players, deep hands with a hand of cards, pugilists,

horse-jockeys, and funny fellows, w comic songs, imitated pigs and pou triloquized, and performed all sorts of practical jokes. The house, in fact, c a concentrated essence of wicked debauchery.

The country ladies declined visiti thorn Manor during the shooting-season was the period when debauchery within its walls; but the gentry were few favourable exceptions, delighted in the orgies, and participate in the that were carried on day after day, a after night.

Of the effects of such a pernicious upon the lower orders I need hardly Marriages in Maythorn were of rare rence, though the number of its in did not decrease. Great was the in the number of beer-shops and spirit The brewer and the spirit-merchant flourishing men—their customers we and wretched.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Time flew on, as the old fellow always does, with rapid wings. The young Montacute had finished his education at a public school, and was entered at Cambridge. His father had in his boyhood destined him for his successor at the works ; but prosperity altered his views as much as it had altered himself. He determined to bring his son up to one of the liberal professions — he did not care which. He resolved to educate him with that view, but to leave the choice of law, physic, or divinity to himself.

The hopeful boy had already made up his mind to follow neither one nor the other, but to wait, as he said, until “ the governor was served,” and then to spend the earnings of a

long and successful life, as a man of independent property should do, which, in estimation, was precisely as Mr. Earne was doing at Maythorn Manor. He was to "get his hand in" by practising on a small scale as soon as he should go up to Cambridge.

An event occurred, however, which led to these very prudent resolves.

I have already described the enlargement of the factories, and the great increase in the population of Coalbrook. There were at the time upwards of five hundred men employed at the works, besides women and children. The great weekly expense incurred in supporting such a multitude, although it was partly met in food and goods, induced the proprietors to take advantage of a slight fall in the price of coal to lower the wages of the workmen.

The "screw was applied," and caused much dissatisfaction, which showed itself in the form of murmurings, and surly, sulky looks. At the same time, meetings were held; and those who had been political orators in the various clubs and shops were converted into promoters

lion against their employers. These meetings were held nightly, and eventually a strike was resolved upon.

A committee was formed to wait upon the masters, and demand an increase of wages, and those wages to be paid in money, and not, as heretofore, in dear and bad provisions, and inferior articles of clothing.

This committee was formed by drawing lots, and the ten men who drew these lots would willingly have declined the office which fortune had imposed upon them. One among them, however, a daring, dissolute fellow, a scoffer at religion, and a leveller of all ranks in society, threatened that, if they refused to act as they had sworn to do, he would go to Mr. Montacute and make him acquainted with the conspiracy which had been formed. He also told them that he should recommend him to shut up the works, and starve the hands into submission.

These threats had the desired effect. They went to their master in a body. Hunter, the mob orator, agreed to be the speaker.

Mr. Montacute was just sitting down to a

mittee of ten were observed during the night, and Hunter kept himself quite close to his lodgings.

The shops were all closed, but no one knew, as there was no sign of any disturbance, of any violent act being meditated. The Mayor of Maythorn had, at the suggestion of Mr. Montacute, sworn in some sixty special constables, who having been assembled to be ready in case they should be required, separated and returned to their respective homes.

The day passed quietly; the workers were tired early to their houses, and there was no difference observable in matters connected with the works, was, that the furnaces — those which had been run to seed — no longer burned, and the flames and smoke, and the noise of the hammer that flattened the iron plates, were no longer heard.

The master of the works and the other officials, who had not joined in the strike, were conscious that an attack might be made on the works during the night, sat up at night. In the morning found them watching, and

in vain, for no sign of a disturbance had appeared. In this way a week passed. No correspondence took place between the employer and his men. The shops, it is true, had been opened in the borough, but anxiety and a sense of impending danger were visible in the looks of the townsmen.

Montacute and his clerks, weary of watching, and no longer dreading open violence, at the end of the week retired to their beds, leaving three constables to guard the works, and to rouse them if any thing should occur to render their presence necessary. For four nights their rest was undisturbed, but on the fifth they were called hastily from their beds. What a fearful sight presented itself to their eyes! The works were one mass of flame. Factories, store-houses, counting-houses, all burning together!

As Montacute rushed down the path by the brook side towards the spot, he saw that an immense crowd stood, armed with sticks, pokers, and other weapons, in a circle round the building.

When he drew near, he was told by a man

whose face was covered by a piece of crape, but by whose voice he recognised, that no person would be allowed to approach the works until they were consumed. Montacute was a powerful resolute man, and endeavoured to thrust the person aside and rush past him. He was seized in a moment and thrown to the ground. He rose and struggled with his antagonist, who told him that he had no wish to hurt him, but merely to keep him from entering the works before they were burnt to the ground. Montacute, with awful oaths, called for his name, and assured him he would leave him stone unturned to have him hanged as an incendiary. Hunter thrust his hands into the master's neckcloth, and, pressing his knees against his throat, would have choked him, had not a tremendous explosion thrown them both to the ground, where they lay for some time stunned. Several barrels of powder purposely placed under the two immense brick chimneys had ignited. The solid masonry and brickwork were shivered to pieces, and the shrieks of men, women, and children,

that many had been injured by the scattered fragments.

With these shrieks of agony were mingled shouts of triumph and the laughter of demons. They seemed to rouse both the fallen master and man, not only from stupor but to phrensy. Both sprang to their feet, and renewed the struggle in which they had been previously engaged. It lasted not long, however; for Hunter, throwing his opponent to the ground, seized a fragment of the fallen chimney, and hurling it at his head, dashed out his brains.

The horrid event was quickly known to all the rioters, and they dispersed in different directions, all, with the exception of Hunter, who *could* not quit his victim. He had not meditated murder, and, vile as he was, the notion of having destroyed life deprived him of energy enough even to escape the consequences of his crime. He was seized and thrown into prison, tried, and executed. The rioters were many of them punished; but they preserved their secret so well, that no one knew who of them it was that planned or carried into effect the burning of the works.

Now let us see the result of this deed upon the other characters of the drama.

Of the widow I will only say, that weeks waned away without fully conscious of what was passing her. The fire, the destruction of her party, and the murder of her husband, whom she had been warmly attached to, had been too much for her; her brain was affected, and for some days it was impossible for her to recover the shock. Her son attended upon her with the greatest attention; indeed, he only quitted her at the bidding of the doctors to take rest.

Mr. Ernest Lowe, when he was informed of the sad result of the *starving* system, which had so cruelly recommended, was enraged. He called a few friends at his little cottage and read the letter which contained the news to his little party, which, if to be told, consisted only of two ladies of damaged reputation, and one very intimate friend, who made a great deal of capital in advancing upon undoubtful security.

per cent. This gentleman, when the letter was read, did not pretend to be seriously affected, but whispered to his entertainer.

“ You had better marry the widow, and you will be master of the whole property.”

Mr. Ernest Lowe turned very pale—very pale indeed—which was attributed by the ladies to the excessive grief he felt for the horrid end of his late partner. He tossed off a bumper of wine, ordered post-horses to his travelling-chariot, and hurried down to Maythorn.

He was here engaged for some weeks in apprehending the rioters, and attending their examinations and subsequent trials. He never allowed a day to pass without calling at Coalbrook Cottage to inquire after the health of its mistress, and to assure her son that all would be well, and that he might rely for advice and assistance in every matter on him—“ the friend of the family.”

At the bank all went on as usual, but no one was invited to Maythorn Manor but the senior clerk—the confidential man at the bank. This person spent his time, after

banking hours, with his employer ; they had taken a small quantity of servants were ordered to prepare a library, where a great many large parchment covered books occupied the attention and clerk until they retired to bed at an hour.

As Mr. Ernest Lowe put on a suit of elegant mourning, and wore a face which was pronounced by all his neighbours as the most feeling person. His *heart* was " in the right place."

When Mrs. Montacute had recovered from the shock sufficiently to be removed, the doctor recommended a change of scene. He offered his cottage at Wimbledon for her reception ; and thither, as soon as the necessary removals had been effected by Mr. Lowe, she retreated with her son. In a few weeks was completely restored to health though not to happiness.

As soon as her complete restoration was made known to him by the medical gentleman whom he had engaged to attend her, Ernest Lowe, having put every thing

ing for the rebuilding of the works, hastened up to town. There he had an interview with his friend, the fashionable *advancer*. What took place at that interview cannot be told; but one result of it was, that Mr. Lowe drove down to Wimbledon and put into execution the plan suggested by the money-lender, when the news of Mr. Montacute's murder reached them at the wine-table. He *proposed* to the widow, whom he had prepared for the offer of his person and fortune in a series of letters, as he thought, but which she read to mean offers of friendship and assistance, of which she never entertained a doubt. She had always looked upon him as "the friend of the family." When his meaning, however, was personally explained to her, she felt at first greatly shocked; then, when he urged the matter very pressinglly, she, in a kind but firm manner, begged to decline the offer. Mr. Ernest Lowe professed to be greatly hurt, and to shed tears of grief. He even muttered something about life being a burden to him, now that his happiness was destroyed for ever.

Mrs. Montacute, who believed sincere, was much grieved, and she could to console him, assuring him of her gratitude for all past kindnesses, and her reliance upon him in all matters as he had proved himself to be "the friend of the family."

Mr. Lowe, after walking up and down the room with a cambric handkerchief in his hand for some quarter of an hour, uttered a long sigh, and promised never to allude to the subject again.

He did not take his leave, however, but turned the conversation on her family prospects, and her intentions with regard to her son. After he had ascertained that she intended to reside at Cambridge until he should have taken his degree, he very much approved of—Mr. Lowe made some inquiries and suggestions, with a view to obtaining her signature to a petition, which, strange to say, he had in his pocket-book, and which is called a power of attorney. It enabled him to receive her dividends, and to sell out and buy in stock—in short,

he pleased with her funded property, which she supposed to amount to a considerable sum. Could she do better than intrust the management of it to a wealthy banker, and the "friend of the family?"

Mr. Lowe's fingers trembled as they returned the document into his pocket-book. He took a most affectionate leave of his dear friend and her son, and returned, after passing a few hours with his ally, the advancer, to his home at Maythorn Manor, where he opened house again to his friends and neighbours, and received plans and contracts for the rebuilding of the factories at Coalbrook.

Mrs. Montacute left Wimbledon on the morning following the important interview with "the friend of the family," and went to reside at Cambridge with her son, who had been already entered as a fellow-commoner in that University. At her request, Mr. Lowe paid £500 into the Cambridge Bank. Here I must leave the widow and her son, and return to Maythorn Manor.

It was on a beautiful day in June that a very large party was assembled at the Manor.

There was an archery meeting, followed by a dinner and a ball in the evening—was done on the most splendid scale. Every body pronounced the giver of the entertainment a most splendid fellow. After midnight the guests ordered their carriages and departed. The servants, worn out by their day's exertions, retired to rest. Mr. Lowe partly undressed himself, and dismissed his valet, bidding him not to wake him too early in the morning.

About half an hour afterwards he might have been seen to come out of Lowe's room, dressed in the garb of an old man, with gray locks and whiskers, and a pair of tortoiseshell spectacles. He looked very much, and seemed to be suffering from the load of years, if not of infirmities. He went slowly and softly down the carpeted stairs, opened the hall-door very gently, and called it after him. He then looked up at the servants' windows, and, seeming satisfied with his inspection, walked through the small gate that opened into a lane communicating with the high-road to Ch...

low whistle was answered, and a gig, driven by a man dressed as a quaker's servant, came up from beneath some high trees which shaded the lane. Mr. Lowe—for it was himself—sprang into it, and was driven by his confidential clerk at a very smart trot to the Old Passage, where a boat was waiting for them.

In a few hours, and before the archery party had risen from their beds, the two sham quakers were on board the good ship *Washington*, and on their way to the New World. Their passage had been paid, and their luggage put on board at Bristol, under the name of Aminadab Straight and servant. They were to be waited for at Portishead Point. The captain might have had his suspicions, but—it was no business of his.

At ten o'clock of the same day, when the bank ought to have opened, it did not. A small ticket on the door, however, kindly announced that Lowe, Montacute, and Co., had suspended payment.

I shall not attempt to describe the consternation that ensued, or the ruin that followed;

suffice it to say, that after the sale of the thing, including the cottage at Coalbrookdale, which Mr. Lowe had managed to get for the best price, the creditors received $2\frac{3}{4}d.$ in the pound, and cursed their folly for trusting a man who had landed property worth about £100,000, and had issued notes to the tune of £1,000,000.

The agreeable tidings of her entire recovery for Lowe had stripped her of every friend who was brought to Mrs. Montacute at this unfortunate moment. She had just heard of the death of her son—her only hope in life—was in the bath while bathing in the Cam.

A long and serious illness followed, during which she found many friends in the clergy and laity at Cambridge, who learnt her history and sympathized in her griefs. Mrs. Lauderley was the first to hear of her fate by a friend at Cambridge, who brought the asylum at Mount Whistling, where Montacute was taught to forget her woes, and to forgive

“ THE FRIEND OF THE FAMILY ”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"It has often occurred to me as somewhat singular," said I to my friend Jonathan Sternpost, as he concluded the story of Mrs. Montacute, his cigar, and whisky toddy at the same moment, "that people are so ready and willing to confide their little all to a bank of issue, or, better, a banker who issues to an unknown extent."

"Bah!" said Jonathan, looking contemptuously, and selecting cigar No. 2 from his box of Cabanas.

"Why bah?"

"Bah! bah! bah! help yourself, my dear fellow, and do not express your wonder at any thing of the sort," replied my friend. "People take things for granted, and hate

trouble. They are told that Smash are very rich, and they believe it. certain sums to receive and pay, and them a world of trouble, and gives air of respectability to do it through and Co. A check for £2 14s. given to a little wine-merchant for a dozen of calls sherry — Marsala spoiled by strong Spanish—*tells* more with him it were remunerated in two sovereigns half in gold, and four shillings. Besides, every one likes to talk of 'my banker,' and 'my account at the bank,' as far as one's pride is concerned, whether it if 'my banker' is solvent or not, whether the account is overdrawn or not. Then and Co. *happen* to fail, and in the event such events *will* occur, it sounds as if I say, 'I risked my whole fortune with and Co. and they have smashed.' it is a great consolation to be ruined with a ruined banker: your name is in the papers amongst a list of fellow sufferers, and you are brought into notoriety as a witness against your banker in

ruptcy Court. It is a fair excuse for not paying a troublesome dun that you are involved with Smash and Co., and until a dividend is declared you cannot 'stump up.' Ten to one your dun is involved with him too, and he sympathizes with you, and gives *your* excuse for non-payment to the very first individual who comes to his shop to dun *him*."

"I have but little in the world to invest," said I, "but I think I should be cautious in investing it—I am so little acquainted with money matters that I dare say I use the wrong term—in depositing it, may be better, with any man who had not a good estate in dirty acres — tangible subsoil — whether of marl, loam, stonebrash, sand, or blue clay."

"Good," said Jonathan; "there is nothing like having some '*ground* to stand upon.'"

"And to fall back upon," I continued. " 'Fallen, fallen from his high estate' is not so very desperate a fall if you have your banker's estate to fall upon; but where there is the *vox et præterea nihil*, the name on the brass plate, of Smash and Co., bankers, and

nothing else, great is the fall of you and your little dependants."

"It is inconceivable the extent to which the reliance on such men is carried, the depth of misery which results from the weening confidence reposed in them, who have a character for more than a fair share of prudence in worldly matters," said Jonathan.

"Inconceivable, indeed! how many families Lowe has ruined every tradesman in the town, and driven maids, wives, and children into parish poorhouses? There is no consolation," said I, rather emphatically, giving the table a glass-gingling rap with my fist, "the causes of ruin to others are laid severely themselves, and pay for the ruin they have caused by years of private wretchedness."

"*Exempli gratiä*," said Jonathan, looking at me basiliskishly through the smoke of his cigar, "I know a case in point. The sufferings of a ruined banker were the most painful events I ever witnessed."

"Indeed!" said I. "I confess I

a pleasure in hearing them described, though I am not generally hard-hearted, and have known one case at least where the kind-hearted feelings of a banker, and an incapability of saying *no* to a man in need, have ruined himself and his family: say on."

I thought I saw a very odd kind of expression flit, like a vapoury cloud on a hot summer's day, over my friend's face, displacing for a second the basilisk look that I have alluded to, and a convulsive twitch of the corners of his mouth, as he removed the cigar from his lips to tell me the following little anecdote.

"I had—a friend, I was going to say—an acquaintance, I mean—who opened a bank in a country town, which, as I cannot reveal the real name of it, I will call Dullton. He 'carried on the war,' as Mr. Ernest Lowe would have called it, 'most gloriously.' Who so gay as he? Dinners, card-parties, balls, and all sorts of rioting and revelling, were rife in his mansion; and never did charity, or the giving away of money, for what are called charitable purposes, exhibit itself at a more

'bountiful old rate' than it did at of the principal banker's in Dullton

"Robbing Peter to subscribe said I.

"Exactly," replied Jonathan. the best of it, and the Peters severely; for in the height of — prosperity — smash! he was gone done up completely."

"More to his own surprise, than the surprise of his customers ironically.

"I really think so," said Jonathan. he meant to realize largely on a in tallows, and to invest the real landed property, if he had been of which he had no doubt, as he had office given him' by some parties supposed to be 'wide awake,' and themselves to have been so by 'the time when they recommended Co. to 'buy.' The consequence friendly advice was, that — and buy, and cleaned out the tallow- their coffers at one and the same

They were gazetted, but not 'to a company.' The company was found to be *nil* (*vel, nemo*), and .——, the banker, was ruined past redemption."

"Ruining some few hundreds with him, whose hundreds he was supposed to have safe in his safe," said I.

"Precisely; but that is not what I wished to describe," continued Sternpost, "I merely wished to let you have an insight into the horrible state of living of —— himself, after closing the bank, and retreating from the town of Dullton."

"That is what I long to hear," said I, looking very maliciously gratified; "now, then;" and I really believe I rubbed my hands exultingly over the fancied miseries of a man who had, through his fancies, ruined hundreds.

"He had not left his home in Dullton many weeks when I received a letter from him, in which, after expressing his deep regret for the *inconvenience*—it was a very mild term—which he had caused to one of

my relations by leaving her p
begged of me to call on him at 'of a place,' to which he had re
neighbourhood of Blackheath, in
he might explain to me the causes
mistake in 'vesting the moneys de
him. The letter was so cleverly
contained so glowing a description
sent wretchedness, that I resolved
and, leaving all business consider
the question, to offer him all the
n my power."

"Well," said I, "you found
wretched, his wife in tears, his
rags? Cold shoulder of mutton
on a dingy table-cloth, and ..."

"Bah! if you know the r
things, why ask me to tell you ab
I begged pardon.

Jonathan proceeded.

"Well, I got into a stage in
Street, and gave the coachman
me down at Prospect Cottage, w
classic name assigned by —— t
hut of a place.'

“ ‘All right,’ said Jehu, ‘I know it; Mr. ———’s *cottage horney*.’

“ We rattled along, and, after many other stoppages for taking up and putting down passengers, I found myself the *ultimus Romanorum*, the last of the insides, with one exception, and that exception was a very sly-looking, elderly gentleman, wearing the livery of the society of Friends, *aliis verbis*, a quaker.

“ This gentleman had briefly replied to a series of interrogations on my part, by a yea or a nay, nor could I get one word more from him until the coach was suddenly jerked up opposite one of the prettiest little mansions I had ever seen.

“ ‘Whose very pretty place is that?’ said I, addressing the quaker.

“ ‘It is the abode—the *cottage* of thy friend—the bankrupt banker, where I did hear thee order the driver to deposit thee,’ was the reply; the truth of which was confirmed by Jehu opening the door, and saying—

“ ‘Now, sir, here we is.’

"I explained to him that there was some mistake. He assured me and at the same time, as he mounted the horse, it was 'all right.'

"The horses believed him, and then leaving me standing before a very old Gothic lodge, and a large pair of iron gates.

"Can this be 'the little hut of the porter' I thought I—and I believe I thought I—before I could pull the handle of a bell dangling outside the lodge, a high servant, in a dazzling livery, took his hat to me through the bars of the gate, and requested to be informed of my business.

"I hesitatingly inquired if Mr. Parsons was there.

"The porter, without giving an answer to my query, threw open the gate, and begged me to walk up to the cottage, as his master would join me in a few minutes, as he was merely gone out for a short time in his pheayton, and had left word that he would be home to lunch punctually at two o'clock.

"'Phaeton!' thought I, *aloud* again, in my own mind, for Cerberus, brushing his plumed

“ ‘Yas, sarh! Master’s gone out in the pheayton, for the *brishcar* is out of repair.’

“ I own I thought — but not aloud — that there must be some mistake; I, however, threaded the mazes of a serpentine walk through the shubberies to the cottage.

“ I knocked at the door, and inquired of a second six-footer, in splendid plushes, &c., if this was Mr. ——’s.

“ The same affirmative reply, and the same assurance, that ‘He was only gone out for a drive in the pheayton, and would be in to lunch at two, punctual,’ induced me to enter the house.

“ I was shown into a very correctly-appointed study, and amused myself by looking at the backs of some superbly bound books, which filled the shelves of a series of neat mahogany cases. I had not been long engaged in my survey, when a handsome *or-molu* clock, in a glass case, announced by its miniature bell that it was ‘two of the clock by the dial.’

“ Scarcely had the sound ceased, when the sound of hoofs and the grating of wheels on the well-rolled gravel induced me to look out

of the window, and I beheld Mr. bankrupt banker, 'tooling' as pre of tits, harnessed to as well appoin riage as I had ever seen turned interior was filled by his wife and t ters, who certainly

Bore their blushing honours thick upon

for they were decked out in pink silk ribbons, which colour happened the the fashion. A coachman sat by h side, and a huge fellow held on behind *only* the fourth male servant that *as yet*.

"A tremendous rat-tat-tat—e Eaton Square—was the signal for doors, letting down steps, and ot preliminary to ladies descending riages. A little bustle took place i and all was silent for a few minut came the servant who had admitte begged me to follow him to the draw I went, of course, and walked as Schedoni, or any other mysterious in romance, over carpets, as soft and

as the *tapis vert* of an English garden, to a room which rivalled in splendour many a drawing-room in May Fair.

“Although the furniture and effects of the banker had been sold by public auction at his house in Dullton, I recognised many articles which had graced—might I not say with justice, under the circumstances, *disgraced*?—that splendid mansion. There was the horizontal grand pianoforte of *rosewood*, and by *Broadwood*; the ornamented harp by Erard; the magnificent chimneyglass, reaching from the marble-slab to the very ceiling, around whose frame fluttered little gilded cupids in all the manner of equivocal attitudes. There were articles of *vertu*, and little crinkum-crankums, as expensive as they were useless. In fact, except that the room was very much smaller than the one in which I had seen these elegancies at Dullton, I might have fancied myself to have been transported in my sleep by some fairy porter into that magnificent establishment.

“I had scarcely time to examine the furniture before Mr. — entered. He had evi-

without taking a little luncheon. I consented, I confess to you, out of pure curiosity—a wish to see the style in which such matters were done at this ‘little hut of a place.’ The bell was rung, and the servant ordered to announce to the ladies that we would take luncheon with them.

“While the man went to execute the order given, Mr. —— began to complain bitterly of the change—the unavoidable, the painful change—in his mode of living, and the frightful deprivations to which he was obliged to submit in his altered circumstances.

“I threw a meaning glance round the room. He saw it, and replied to it by saying that some kind friends, sympathizing with his wife’s feelings, had come forward and bought in a few little trifles, which it was impossible for a lady of her refined taste to do without, and which the little income which had been fortunately settled upon her entitled her to enjoy.

“I felt calcitatory inclined at the quiet hypocritical way in which this explanation was given; but lunch was announced, and I

was ushered with much ceremony into the dining-room, which I saw at a glance was a miniature likeness of the banquet hall at Dullton. It was clear to me that the sympathizing friends who had saved the drawing-room had 'bought' the new furniture, pictures, and plate that the refined taste could not do without.

"The refined lady and her daughters had evidently rehearsed their part they had to play. They sat down to the table and with deep sighs to the little mother ——— waved her hand tragedy-queen-like, and the servant, removing the solid silver covers of four solid silver dishes, displayed the contents—viands of exquisite odours, evidently not concocted by an English cook. They were discussed, but not freely, by the ladies and ourselves, and were succeeded by a little game and cheeses in great variety, and the wines! amidst the deep regret of the *ci-devant* banker and his spouse, who could not treat me *now* as they had before their misfortunes overtook them, they quaffed silleri, chateau margôt,

and Burgundy out of splendid glasses, filled from chased silver beakers. I felt a sort of undefined hope that the wine might 'go the wrong way,' and suffocate one or all of them.

"It had a contrary effect; it threw them off their guard. They forgot the parts they had to play, and, on a few hints maliciously thrown out by me for the express purpose, rattled away as they were wont to do of yore, and gave me a very clear insight into the shocking deprivations to which their altered circumstances forced them to submit. It was really shocking what they must have suffered! two carriages and a pony-chaise put down! only two pair of horses and a hackney left in the stables! scarcely enough servants left to do the duties of the establishment! the German governess *chasséd*, and only two English ones retained! &c. &c. &c., *usque ad nauseam*.

"A loud ring at the lodge-bell gave me a fair excuse for abdicating my seat. I left them with a formal bow—a kitchen pokerer—and mounted a stage that was passing just as three handsome carriages drew up at the

gate, filled with the gayest of the had travelled from town to Black condole with the suffering banker in hut of a place.'

"There is a tale of horror for Jonathan, with a peculiar smile; 'lest it should cause you a sleepless

"But the dividend," said I; "paid?"

"Yes," replied Sternpost, "it v end of three years—and amounted cepted, to exactly tenpence-three- the pound."

"And Mr. —?"

"Still survives at his little hut on a limited number of carriages the little property fortunately set wife."

"Confound him! he ought to b

"No! no! better as it is," said deprecating my rising wrath, and fine current of abuse, "better as upon it, there is a little something region of his stomach that spoils of his Burgundy, and embitters t

his French cookery. He gives away largely in charity to hide the multitude of his wickedness."

"Charity!" said I—"what an abuse of the word!"

"Well, then, charities—the word in its plural has a very different application; and, by the by, if you are not too sleepy, I will tell you a little tale of a 'man of many charities,' the husband of the widow who sat next to Mrs. Montacute."

"A pretty little woman, with smiling blue eyes, and a most unromantic *ensemble*," said I.

"A sweet-tempered creature, with a heart too big for her pretty little body. You shall hear her history."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

There is a spot in the centre of London, but now in the far east, in reference to Eaton Square and the ham Palace. It bears the unclassical name of Cow Cross. The propriety, however, of the name cannot be disputed, for it is in the immediate neighbourhood of that distant and removed market called Smithfield. It is a place of glory to Mr. Martin — alas! the late Mr. Martin — M.P. for Galway.

How he would rush into a crowd of man drovers as they were goading a driven ox, and making him progress by driving him cruelly over the hocks, and would seize on the greatest brute of

I do not mean the ox, but the man — and, in spite of all opposition, drag him up to the nearest magistrate, put in force his own act against him, assuring his worship that “the baste there that calls himself a man would have murdered the other baste intirely altogether, if he had not been there to intherfare in his behalf !”

Well, in Cow Cross stood a large, long, murky shop. You might have gazed at its low shop-window, composed of thick sashes and small panes of muddy, dusty glass, for ages before you could have made up your mind as to the nature of the trade carried on within. You might have fancied that it was the habitation of a pawnbroker — the universal *patruus* or *avunculus* of the lower orders—for, as far as the dinginess of the glass would enable you to see, it was filled with every description of portable property. There were pistols, guns, and swords; mathematical instruments of all kinds; watches and jewellery; clothes of all sorts for masculine gentlemen, feminine ladies, and juveniles of both sexes; writing-desks, dressing-cases; cutlery

of all sorts; a large assortment of boots and shoes innumerable; and pictures; children's toys, and articles too numerous to mention.

Yet it was not what is termed initiated, the nephews and nieces of the aforesaid uncle, a *pop*-shop. If you go above the shop-front, you might see a broad, black board, in white letters distinctly written, BARNABAS JUST, and what is a tallyman? asks every attentive reader.

Let him or her—M. or N., as they may be—follow that not very respectable man into the shop, and he or she will find out the nature and objects of tallying.

She is the wife of a hardworking watchcase-maker at Clerkenwell, who wants a new gown to appear at the Greenwich fair, whither she has no mind to go. She cannot command the shillings necessary to pay for the dress at the linendraper's, so she goes to Barnabas Just, and agrees to give him the shillings for the same article, and

it by weekly instalments of one shilling each, which she contrives to secrete out of the sum allowed her by her goodman for the expenses of the house. When she has paid more than the real value of the article, she is allowed to carry it away, and a collecting clerk calls weekly upon her for the payment of the shilling.

Such is a brief sketch of the nature and objects of this most abominable business, which does more to demoralize and ruin the lower classes than a Tom and Jerry, tidley-wink, or gin-shop. They can obtain any thing, from a pair of list-shoes to a court-dress; from a brass shirt-pin to a diamond tiara, if they are willing to pay double its value for it by weekly instalments.

Over such an establishment Barnabas Just had presided for many years; and though his establishment was, of necessity, an expensive one, his profits had been so great, his instalments so regularly paid up, that he was a wealthy man. He was tired of his business, and resolved to take an active partner, and become a sleeping one himself. He wanted

fresh air; he felt smoky and decided to resolve to retire to the heights of Hampstead, or Finchley, and get purified from the sulphuretted hydrogen of the city end of the metropolis.

He had but little difficulty in effecting his objects he had in view. His foreman advanced the amount necessary for buying him a half of the concern. An advertisement in the *Times* readily procured him a house in Finchley Common, and while he was in furnishing the house and arranging his grounds, buying a carriage and horses, hiring servants, Barnabas was a happy man. He did *not* pay by instalments, but *downed* with the money at once, and obtained a liberal discount for "the ready."

When the place was properly fitted for a final reception, and he had given a house-warming dinner to his city friends, Barnabas began to feel himself an independent tallyman. He could not buy happiness even enjoyment for ready money, or he could not get it by instalments. He was very much surprised at it.

He worked in his garden, rode out in his carriage, had a nap before dinner, and another after, drank the best of wines—as far as port and sherry went — smoked his pipe in an arbour of his own architecturing, and retired early to bed ; yet he was cruelly dull. He could not read ; he hated writing ; moreover, he had no one to write to, and nothing to write about, save to his partner and about the tally trade. His only pleasure, real pleasure, that is, during the six working days, was to muse and meditate upon the chances of which and what number of his friends would get off the Finchley stage at the Baldfaced Stag on the following Sunday, in order to be in time for his well-spread dinner-table. How he wished every day in the week was a Sunday !

Even these Sunday dinners ceased to amuse him. He saw the same faces over and over again, only relieved now and then by some strange countenance, the effigies of some friend, whom one of his old friends “had taken the liberty of bringing with him, as he know’d his old friend Barnabas didn’t stand upon no sort of ceremony.”

Moreover, although these old friends were hearty of his beef and plum-pudding, of his porter and port wine, they had not invited him to return their visits. Perhaps he thought that, as he did not stand in need of money, he could have come uninvited and be pleased. Perhaps they had good grounds for supposing that he was sick of London, and preferred remaining at his very quiet home in the country.

Barnabas was resolved to cut the connection effected between the City and Finchley by the medium of the Finchley stage. He did not like to warn his friends off formally, or to put up a notice that the dogs and spring-guns would hereafter be on the premises to catch or shoot his Sunday visitors. He manœuvred, and succeeded in his manœuvres.

He went down to Margate for a week, and left word with his housekeeper to tell every one that called, that he had retired to the country for an indefinite term, and to pay his servants on board-wages. He thought this would have the desired effect.

that not one of his dear friends would pay for more than one half-crown ticket at the ordinary on Sundays at two o'clock, at the Bald-faced Stag, and the fare up and down by the Finchley stage. He was right. Two stages full inside and out — two ordinaries at the little wayside inn — did the business. On the third Sunday the stage was empty, and the inn deserted. The experiment had succeeded.

Barnabas returned to his home. Previously to his return, he had given his partner a hint that he should be glad to see *him* whenever he liked to come down, but that he was not at home to those who had shown so thorough a contempt for the system of reciprocity which ought to be held sacred in matters of hospitality.

Barnabas enjoyed himself alone — that is, with his old housekeeper — for two successive Sundays. The third came, and he began to regret that he had discouraged the visits of his friends. He gave his partner a special invitation for the fourth Sunday; but, as he talked of nothing but tally-maning, of which

he was truly tired, Barnabas did not to repeat the visit.

All at once it struck him, and hit him hard too, that his home was not so good as it ought to have been, simply because he had not a wife to share it with him. He consulted with his housekeeper, who recommended his views on the subject, and he discovered from the tenor of her remarks that he had no intention of promoting her to the head of his table.

Then she "went on the other tack," as sailors say, and threw out many hints, marriage being a mere lottery, more like a lottery than prizes; the odds being ten to one that you would not get even a sixteenth of a five pound prize, and about a million to one you would not get the highest prize in the wheel.

Her remarks, however, came too late. The eloquence she had displayed in promoting her views as long as she thought that she might be Mrs. B. J. was of too forcible a nature to be obliterated by her feeble afterthoughts. Barnabas resolved to get married, and he felt that the whole and sole cause

butchers' and grocers' bills, soap and candles, bread, flour, and kitchen-stuff, was gone from her for ever. She began to look out for another place, reasonably supposing that no married lady would permit a bachelor's house-keeper to remain in her service after the honeymoon was over.

Barnabas had but a very limited acquaintance in the female world. He had never been domestically received into his friends' families. The civilities he had received from them previously to his retirement had generally been displayed in the dining or supper-rooms of certain favourite taverns, where they were wont to resort to pay and receive bets of rumps and dozens, or legs of mutton and trimmings.

He resolved, however, to make a round of his friends' houses, and examine their establishments to see what female commodities they contained. He began with the wealthiest first — though, to do him justice, Barnabas was not a mercenary man; still, he thought, a *little* money with a wife was not objectionable. He made his calls, but, except in two

instances, where he found only a h like his Becky, presiding, he was farther than the back-shop. Ha given one hint to any one of his he was exploring, on a voyage of every house, from garret to dra would have been thrown open to daughter and niece, unmarried sis dependant cousin, brought before spection and approval.

Becky, to whom he confided th his calls, after trying to induce hi single, and, finding her attempts u suggested to him that he should g and invite all his friends and th This had the desired effect. after glass-coach deposited its ladies, varying from sixteen to si door of his house, and the ball w nished with guests. Barnabas w tallyman *in prospectu*.

Becky gave a hint of the objec master had in view, when he ga tickets for the ball, to one of his ol The news flew like wildfire — fas

pigeon from Epsom to Liverpool or Manchester; and Barnabas found himself the nucleus of the ball-room, with ladies radiating from him in all directions, of all ages, heights, and complexions. He grew alarmed. His merits were so suddenly and so forcibly placed before him, that, instead of believing himself, as he had hitherto done, to be a respectable, plain-looking, ill-dressed, middle-aged gentleman, he was impressed with a conviction that Mrs. Grigs was right when she said that he was "a wery fine-feater'd man," and that the wife of Mr. Deputy Gubbins could not be wrong when she pronounced his "general cut to be oncommon particular correct." Nor could he give discredit to Huggins's sister, who whispered to his nearest neighbour, that she "thought Mr. B. Just was too young to settle down for life *yet*."

Still Barnabas, though flattered, was what Huggins called flabbergasted. He was too evidently "made a dead set at." If he went to talk to a pretty-looking girl, he was surrounded immediately by mothers, who begged to introduce him specially to their own Anna

Marias, Isabellas, or Julias; and more virtues predicated of their girls, than he had had the slightest belonged to the sex generally.

Barnabas's ball ended without a success on his part. He had not the slightest chance of making one. He was not allowed to be alone with any *one* lady for any one moment. They flocked around him in covies, and led on by the old hens, their mammae complained, in bitter terms, to Becky, in which his guests had treated him. Becky, to console him, told him "you were right."

Wonderful was the sum disbursed on threepenny posters, containing invitations from his lady friends to evening parties. Barnabas accepted them all. He put a dance into a musical party, and at a musical party he popped into a card party. But he neither danced, listened to music, nor cut in at whist. He could not, he was too much excited. Some of his friends *said* he was mad, others only *thought*

a little event occurred which loosened the frænum of their tongues.

Mrs. Deputy Gubbins had three very fine daughters, who sang, played, and danced to admiration — that is, to the admiration of several young men in the ward of Portsoken. All these acquirements they owed to a remarkably nice young lady, who had been educated in an orphan school, and been hired out, when her time was up, to Mrs. Deputy Gubbins, at twenty pounds per annum. Truly she earned this noble salary ! Not only had she to drive all she could into the thick heads and coarse fingers of her three pupils, but had to bear the snubs and rubs of Papa and Mamma Gubbins, and to submit to the impudence of their menials, who looked upon her as “a vastly inferer character to themselves.” Still Lucy Lovechild bore with all her troubles and all her snubbings and rubbings, with a meek and humble spirit, though her heart was at times well nigh broken.

What had she to hope for ? she, an orphan, without a relative in the world that she knew of ? When her time of service should have

expired, she could only look forward to be transported into another family, where she would treat her worse than the Gubbinses. She was, however, concealed her wearied heart, and her calm, placid brow, and relied on her husband to provide for the friendless orphan.

Barnabas Just staid the whole of the week, sitting at the Deputy's. He hung round the piano, turned over the leaves of the books, sung second to "All's Well that Ends Well," much out of tune, and stood up to dance the minuet and drille. He repeated his visit. Next day, one night his yellow chariot was at the door, and he drove to the Gubbinses, though there was no one there. Mrs. Deputy was too good to refuse to throw away a chance. No one shared the house with her daughters, so no one had the right to enter the drawing-room but her daughter Lucy Lovechild; but then she was a governess."

Mrs. Deputy Gubbins saw clearly that Barnabas Just was caught by one of her daughters, and by which of them she neither knew nor cared. She told the deputy in confidence, and he told her that she had a conviction on her mind.

would not be very long before the gentleman in the tally trade proposed.

Mr. Deputy, who had been dining with his fellow Portsokenites, turned on his side, and told her "not to bother him."

Mrs. Gubbins was right, however, in her conviction. Barnabas Just did propose.

Thus it was. Mrs. Gubbins had shammed ill for the purpose of leaving her daughters open to an offer unrestrained by her presence. Barnabas had purchased four concert-tickets for that very evening, and a glass-coach was hired, and at the door to convey four ladies to the concert-room.

Now Mrs. Deputy could not recover from her indisposition with sufficient rapidity to make one of the party. Her ticket was transferred to the governess, who, for propriety's sake, was ordered to accompany her pupils and their lover.

What took place during that evening it is not in my power to disclose. *All* the young ladies said it had passed off delightfully.

On the following morning, the yellow chariot was at the deputy's door at twelve precisely.

The tallyman begged to speak to Mr. *alone*.

Hurry scurry! helter skelter! Miss Gubbinses ran up stairs to put on their best clothes and their best looks with beating hearts!

There we must leave them, and go into the drawing-room.

Barnabas found the lady-mother in a state; not quite alone, it is true. Lovechild was there, but, as she had never worn't of no manner of consequence *only* the governess."

Barnabas blushed, and the governess

"You must have seen, madam, that I have formed an attachment to your...."

"In course, I have — I ain't bawling a mole," said the lady, smiling pleasantly.

"I am here, marm, to ask you to...."

"It's granted—Mr. Barnabas Jones is ringing the bell," said the lady.

"Pardon me one moment, before

nounce my happiness to your daughters. I think I ought to tell you what provision I have made for my future wife in case of my death. You are her protector — her only friend....”

“Her father....”

“She is fatherless, and....”

“Fatherless! who? why the deputy ain’t departed sudden?” screamed the lady.

“I am speaking of this young lady,” said Barnabas, taking Lucy by the hand, and leading her up to her protector.

Mrs. Gubbins shrieked, threw herself back in her chair, and kicked so energetically, that she upset a little table, and smashed a glass vase containing two golden and one silver fishes.

The noise summoned the daughters from above, and the father from below. What a sight met their eyes! There was the mother in mock hysterics, kicking and throwing her arms about her frantically, Mr. B. J. holding the fainting governess on his bosom, and the three little fishes flapping their little

tails on the wet Wilton, amidst f
crystal.

An explanation ensued ; a wa
followed ; screams were uttered,
threats given and received ; and,
nabas half carried the poor littl
down stairs, the last he heard fro
binses was :—

“Saucy minx ! Imperent felle

The impudent fellow placed the
in his yellow chariot, and drove
partner's, where he left her fo
under the care of that gentleman's
he went to procure a licence. On
ing morning, the bells of the pa
rang a merry peal, for Miss Luc
was Mrs. B. Just.

“What a brute !” said his fo
friends.

“What a fool !” cried the
marry a girl without any *tin* !—o
ness, too !”

CHAPTER XXXV.

Twelve months passed. Barnabas was really happy, for his wife had very wisely induced him to take a little interest in the business again. He drove daily into Cow Cross, looked into the books, chatted to his customers, and returned home to his five o'clock dinner, with a little fund of conversation for the evening. He smoked a pipe while Lucy played and sang to him, and went to bed a really happy tallyman.

The cup of happiness, however, is never unmixed. The drop of bitter in the chalice of Barnabas Just was — that he had not a child to call him father.

This vexed him, and preyed on his mind ; he grew fidgety, then fretful, would not go

to town, but moped about his garden at the weeds with a paddle. He lost his appetite, could not relish his pipe, snatched a moment to kiss his dear little wife until the tears came into his eyes, kissed them off again, cried himself out, and at last became really ill.

Mrs. B. J. sent for a doctor, and the doctor, alarmed, sent for the clergyman — who had tried to physic a mind diseased for no purpose.

It would be improper to reveal the contents of a sick chamber. It will only be to show the results of the consultation therein.

Barnabas grew gradually better. When he was completely recovered he became a strong man. I do not mean that he was changed from an invalid to a valetudinarian, but that he was morally as well as physically changed.

He explained to his wife that he was selected to do what he ought to have done, and to give a portion of the talents committed to his care to those that stood in need. He urged him to begin the good work at once. He took her advice.

The reader must have seen that, when Mr. B. J. resolved upon any measure, he carried it out with zeal and impetuosity — nothing could stop him.

When he had made up his mind to be charitable, he became excessively so. He became a governor of every institution that he could hear of within the bills of mortality; he attended public meetings, and subscribed his guineas freely; he dined at public dinners at the Crown and Anchor, and handed up his five pound notes, amidst loud shouts and rappings on the table. He even spoke in favour of the emancipation of the Blacks, and his speech, thanks to the reporters, read remarkably well in the morning and evening papers.

It is needless to say that Barnabas became a public character—a marked man. His table was covered with prospectuses for benevolent institutions, lunatic asylums, and hospitals for the sick and for lying-in ladies. His breakfast was interrupted and prolonged to a painful length, by reading petitions from persons professing to be afflicted by all the

ills that flesh is heir to. Widowers, families and motherless children; with several small fatherless children; little children without fathers or mothers laid their complaints before him, and told him distinctly that he would be ready to do another and a better world if he would but do *their* wants.

That sort of charity, however, was not concordant with his views: he might have done more on if he gave away to persons of whom he knew nothing, but from their own suggestions into the truth or falsehood of which he had no time to inquire. He loved public institutions where the cases were examined before him, and where he saw his name on the governor's room in gold letters on the wall; where he met Lord That; where This, at least once a-year, and received sweet smiles and gracious bows, and his accounts were audited, and he put down his annual subscription.

There was something delightful and respectable in that. He felt that his name was *known* and appreciated.

Now it happened that the clergyman, who had set the machinery of his charities going, had a large little family, and a very small income, as, somehow or other, most clergymen do have. He modestly solicited the interest of Mr. B. J. with his city friends to place one of his boys in Christ's Hospital.

The hint was enough. Barnabas drove into town the very next day, and made inquiries of the secretary of that noble institution, as to the mode of getting on the governor's list. He paid the necessary sum; and, having found out a person who wished to exchange a presentation for a boy who would not be of age for three years, with some one who wished to exercise his right immediately, he returned home, and made his friend, the clergyman, happy by giving his son the appointment.

As soon as the boy was dressed in the peculiar costume of the school, his patron visited him every week. He became mad on the subject of bluecoat schools; he built a new *blue* coat and inexpressibles for himself, and

would have adopted the muffin-cap and stockings, had not his wife prevented by pointing out the absurdity of such a thing. He could talk of nothing else but *blues*, until he gave his wife and children to listen to him the *blue* devils. He was afraid of sailors because they were *blue*; the new police force was a *blue* favourite with him for the same reason. He never passed a fishmonger's shop without buying an unboiled lobster. He cultivated blue bells in his garden, and always had a luncheon at the *Blue* Posts.

How happy he was when the sky was *blue*, and the water below was *blue* in reflection !

The *blue* above and the *blue* below

was his favourite song, and Lucy had learned that verse of "The Sea" over and over every evening, until, as sailors say, she was *blue* in her imagination. He even blew out the candle as he *blew* it out and went into bed. He was clearly in what

heard an old nurse call the *purple* fever, though she, poor ignorant woman, meant to say puerperal.

Barnabas Just became so enamoured of the *blue* school, that at last he came to the resolution of building a *blue* school of his own, upon a small scale. He made up his mind to become as celebrated a founder as King Edward VI., Thomas Sutton, who founded the Charterhouse, or the gentleman—I forget his name—who built and endowed that excellent institution, belonging to the Drapers' Company, in the Mile End Road. He thought *him* a wise man because he dressed his boys in *blue* coatees, and Thomas Sutton a fool, for allowing the Carthusians to wear a *black* dress, like that of an undressed groom in mourning—he resolved, I say, to have a *blue*-coat-school of his own.

He made known his intentions to his wife : she was delighted ; she believed him to be, as he was, very rich, and she thought that he could not do better with some of his superfluous wealth than amuse himself and benefit some of the rising generation.

As soon as Barnabas had made up to become a founder, and be by name, in the daily service of he meant to build, he set about his plans with his wonted energy.

He purchased a bit of land near the scene of his early days, Cow pulled down the dilapidated building on the intended site of "Justice school." Architects were invited to furnish plans, builders were to furnish specifications; lawyers were consulted the proper means of securing the masters and governors for ever men were applied to, to form a committee of twelve, to commence operations as soon as all other operations were completed.

What a happy little tallyman was Just, while employed in this laudable His time was fully occupied; he had spare time for attending Crown Court meetings, though that place was Hall of his days. He scarcely forgot sending his annual subscriptions to

institutions to which he was an annual contributor; he had even entertained thoughts of withdrawing from them all, and concentrating his moneys as well as his energies on the bluecoat school alone; but how could he resign the approving nods and smiles of the lords patrons and the ladies patronesses of those benevolent asylums?—it was not in his nature to do it.

Well, the ground was bought and paid for; the old buildings disposed of for a mere old rubbish price. The plan for the new building was selected and approved of.

The highest contract was entered into, because the chief lord of the committee of twelve patronized that particular builder, and he happened to wear a *blue* surtout when he delivered it into the hands of the founder in his own proper person. Scores of men were set to work at once; and when the builder drew his monthly sums, as specified in the contract, they were readily and cheerfully paid.

Nearly two years had transpired before the building was roofed in. When that happy

day arrived, Barnabas gave a dinner in the hall that was to be, to the countess and twelve, and a feast in the quadrangle to the workmen and their wives and families.

Barnabas got particularly jovial on the occasion, only exceeded himself, but was the cause of no excess in others; but it was very much enjoyed on such an occasion, as the countess and twelve allowed, as they rattled home in their carriages.

On this eventful day, big with the hopes of the *blue-coats* and of Barnabas, we must leave our readers to accompany us to the church where Mrs. Just is quietly sitting in the arbour with old Becky looking fondly fancying the joy of her husband and the fun that was going on at the wedding in Cow-Cross.

A bell rings loudly at the outer door. Becky hastens to answer its summons, wondering who it could be, who was not to know that her master was at school while she was confounding the ringer of it.

She returns in a few minutes

master's partner was in the parlour a-wishing to speak to missus.

Poor Lucy, who fancies that the roof of the building, which, of course, was covered with *blue* slates, had fallen in upon her husband, and crushed himself and all his hopes of founding the school, hurries up the gravel-walk, and enters the parlour in a great fidget.

The gloomy looks of the partner in the tally line confirm her suspicions, and she sinks into a chair, whispering out,

“Then he is dead!”

“Dead, marm,” says the partner, “who?—that old fool, Barnabas? No, marm—I almost wish he was. He’s ruined—*that’s all*—and I am afraid I am not better off myself.”

“Ruined!—Barnabas Just ruined! impossible! He is known to be rich,” says the lady.

“He was rich *once*, marm—he *had* upwards of £15,000, besides his half of the tally trade; but it’s all gone, every dump, and he has been raising money in all directions, and I’ve been fool enough to join him.

I'm in for £5000—only found
afternoon—tried to get at him in
building, but they would not let
gates—looked as *blue* as blazes
sent me away with a *bluebottle* i
I could not stop at home, so hu
tell you. Confound the little ass
schools !”

So saying, the partner throws
the ground, and jumps upon the
to spite Barnabas Just, and then
the house with the crushed be
hand, like a madman, as he was.

Poor Lucy sat like one dream
tried to rouse her from her let
could not. She well knew the c
mistress's sufferings, for she wa
though she was old, and the p
spoken loudly enough to be hea
any keyhole in the world. She d
ment her with questions, therefor
ply told her that she was sure tha
a lie, and that master was as rich

Lucy shook her head, drew a s
her, and sat shivering until the so

riage-wheels announced the return of the man of many charities.

He was carried into the hall, and up to bed, overcome with wine and intense excitement. His wife sat up by his side, and heard him mutter about "the proudest moment of his life,"—"the spot on which future lord chancellors and archbishops were to start for the race of fame,"—"the first step to gaining the honours of the *blue* garter," and other phrases, which proved to her that he was repeating himself in his after-dinner speech.

Morning dawned, but Barnabas opened not his eyes; he tossed and tumbled about in his bed, talked unintelligibly, and laughed in a most unearthly manner.

Lucy was alarmed, and sent a coachman for the nearest medical man. He felt the patient's pulse, and pronounced him to be in a dangerous state of fever.

Barnabas did not recover: a few days sufficed to make Lucy a widow—a widow, and worse than penniless by some hundreds.

The partner's account was quite true. Barnabas, had he lived, must have applied for

support to some one of the numerous of which he had so freely but recklessly reported.

The "Just's bluecoat school" was help to pay the creditors, and is now pieced by a respectable pewterer.

Poor Barnabas's ghost, if it walks, disgusted to see over the gateway building, a half-obliterated inscription thus:

———— T'S ———— AT SCHOOL

This fragment was all that remained of Barnabas Just and his many charities. His widow, who was provided for by Whistling.

END OF VOL II.

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PRINTER TO H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT

PARSONS AND WIDOWS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“**PETER PRIGGINS,**” “**THE PARISH CLERK,**” &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PARSONS AND WIDOWS.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

I mentioned in my last chapter the fact of Mrs. Barnabas Just having been received into the hospitable asylum at Mount Whistling; but I had not space to record the manner in which she became known to the kind-hearted foundress of that institution. This information I think it right to supply, as the adventure that led to the introduction may not prove uninteresting.

After the sale of the house, carriages, and furniture at Finchley, and the unfortunate blue-coat school and fortunate tally-trade at

Cow Cross, Mrs. Just found herself with a very good wardrobe and a few jewels, but the creditors handsomely refused to take her. She had, as the reader may remember, no relations to whom to apply for aid or distresses. She had no friends but the neighbours, who, after the disappointment caused them by interfering with the business upon her husband while he was a single man, were not likely to render assistance. So convinced was she that her application to them would not only be useless, but be productive of insults and reproaches, that she gave up all thought of calling their attention to her situation.

From her neighbours she received but little sympathy, for her late husband had not any anxiety to cultivate their acquaintance and had indeed been impolite enough to return the wedding calls of many of them. The only person from whom she received anything valuable was from the clergyman, whose advice her husband had assisted by placing in the old original blue-coat school. From her his advice, which was all he had

save and except an invitation to stay at his humble home until she should procure a still more humble home of her own. She took his advice, which was to advertise for a situation as governess or assistant in a school, and accepted his invitation until she procured a cheap lodging, which she did in a few days at a cottage in Holloway.

At this cottage Mrs. Just resided for some weeks, living upon the money she had raised by the sale of some of her jewels, and the gold watch her deceased husband had given her upon her wedding-day, from which she felt very reluctant to part. But what was she to do? She had no other means of supporting herself, so the watch was parted with for about half its value. The buyer kindly consented to restore it to its owner again if she could redeem it within one month, and was willing to pay forty per cent. for the accommodation which he had afforded her. Generous man!

Twice a day did she walk from her retired home to the grocer's shop, which was used for the district post-office, in hopes of finding a

letter directed, post paid, to A. B. some days without success. No one was to want a governess, and every school to be furnished with the requisite assistants. Her hopes and her resources gradually growing less, and she was to try some other means than teaching to provide for her scanty wants, when a circumstance occurred which restored her spirit and hopes of success.

During her absence to make her enquiry at the post-office, a gentleman called at her lodgings, and had informed the landlady that his doing so was in consequence of an advertisement which he had seen in a newspaper; that he wanted to find a person who could and would undertake the education of two young ladies, the daughter and the widowed sister. He said that he had retained at the post-office who the name was and where she lived, and that he had been seeing her and talking the matter over with her to communicating his wishes by letter.

The landlady assured him that she would not be long before she returned.

the gentleman said business would not allow of his waiting for her even for a few minutes, but that he would call again on the morrow.

With what anxiety was that morrow expected! The night seemed endless, and the hours of the following day appeared to creep on slowly, as if to add to her irritability and anxiety. At length her untasted dinner was removed, and the hour struck which the stranger had named as the time of his interview. Eagerly did she listen to every footstep that passed, and eagerly did she eye every one whom she could discern from her parlour-window. Seconds went by like minutes, minutes seemed doubled and trebled in length, and, when another hour sounded on the clock, she gave up all hopes, and believed that she was doomed to be disappointed.

She retired to her bed-room, and threw herself upon a little couch, and gave way to a burst of tears she could not restrain. In the midst of her sobbings, she heard a smart double rap at the door. She sprang from her bed and listened. She heard her name mentioned, and the parlour-door opened. She

heard her landlady bid the stranger while she summoned her. She wiped tears from her eyes as hastily as she could and with inflamed eyelashes and trembling met the woman in the passage, who tried to comfort her, for that she had no doubt the stranger would engage her services to relieve her from all further anxiety. That "he looked such a nice gentleman quite fatherly."

Mrs. Just felt a little relieved by these assurances, as she entertained some doubts in her mind whether she was not acting imprudently in granting an interview to a stranger, without having previously obtained a reference from him. When she beheld his appearance was that of a gentleman, the father of a family, she felt less reluctance to meet him. When she entered the room and saw a well-dressed, middle-aged man sitting on her sofa, she thought that the appearance of the house had formed a just estimate of his character. His dress was a black waistcoat, with dark gray trousers, and a white neckcloth, and his hair was

powdered. His age seemed to be verging on fifty years, and his face was one which might have been handsome once—its expression was most benevolent.

The stranger rose on her entrance, and, after surveying her face and figure for an instant, apologized to her for intruding upon her personally, instead of replying to her advertisement by letter, repeating the reasons for such a mode of proceeding which he had assigned to the landlady on the previous day.

Mrs. Just expressed herself as being quite satisfied, and took a seat opposite to him. In the course of the conversation that ensued, she told him her little history, and her present situation, not omitting to inform him that her means were nearly exhausted, and that immediate employment was what she sought.

The stranger listened to her attentively, and seemed so much affected by some parts of her story, that he was obliged to have recourse to deep sighs to relieve the oppression on his bosom, and even to the assistance of a

white cambric handkerchief to remove moisture from his overcharged eyes.

After her explanations were finished, the stranger told her that his sister, and her children he was seeking a governess for, a few miles westward of London; that she was in good circumstances, and was disposed to give a liberal remuneration to any person whom she should deem worthy of the situation of her dear little fatherless children.

Mrs. Just proposed taking down her dress, and going by the stage to have an interview with her. The stranger, however, considerably declined an offer which would have put her to much trouble and expense, and said that he would write to his sister, and come up to town in her carriage, to meet her at her house, in a small street near Russel Square, on the day after the morrow.

Mrs. Just thanked him with tears in her eyes, and the stranger shook her hand, and bidding her not to fail, he fixed a day and hour appointed for the interview, and then took his leave of her.

What a load was removed from

widow's mind ! She was beyond the reach of want once more ! Her heart leaped in her guileless bosom at the thought of it. She considered herself a most fortunate woman, and so she told her landlady over a cup of tea, which she had invited her to partake of in her lodging. The landlady most cordially agreed with her as to her good luck, but seemed to wonder very much that neither party had asked the other for a reference.

" It was very odd," she said, " that a man of the world, as the stranger evidently was, should introduce a strange female into his sister's family without further proof of her respectability than the respectability of her appearance, ascertained at one interview ; she could not quite make *that* out."

Mrs. Just allowed that it showed a want of caution on the part of the gentleman. She thought, however, though she did not say so, that her appearance, and the circumstances of her life which she had related, had satisfied the stranger of the truth of her story, and of her respectability, as fully as his address and assurance had satisfied her of his

being what he professed to be—seeking an eligible governess for the daughters of his widowed sister.

She retired for the night, after God for his provident care of the widow, imploring his blessing on the head of the kind and considerate stranger.

Mrs. Just, on the following morning, did not refrain writing to her friend, Mr. Finchley, to acquaint him with her views in procuring a situation, and begging his assistance, *if* a reference should be asked to refer the party to him.

Now the worthy curate, though a simple-hearted and simple-minded man, known to the world to see the impropriety of a beautiful widow putting herself under the power of a man who, although he was respectable, had acted so incautiously in receiving a stranger visitant at the cottage as he had done. He did not, therefore, answer the letter by post, but, greatly to the widow's surprise, answered it in person, and presented himself at an early hour the following morning in the rooms of

and expressed his intention of going with her to call at the house in — Street, Russell Square.

The widow was in high spirits, and smiled at the curate's suggestion, "that it might possibly happen that the stranger was not what he professed to be."

She related every particular of her interview with him, described his dress, manner and personal appearance. Still the curate shook his head, and, as he put her into the stage, and mounted to the roof himself, bade her not be too sanguine.

On their arrival at the Blue Posts, in Holborn, where the Holloway stage stopped, the curate asked Mrs. Just for the card which the stranger had given her. He read it, and asked the nearest way to the place, as given in the address. A few minutes brought them to the corner house of the street, which happened to be occupied as a baker's shop.

"I must take a bun or a biscuit," said the curate, "for I breakfasted early, and it is now getting late. I shall not detain you long, and I think that a slight refreshment will not

be detrimental to yourself. Let this shop."

Mrs. Just consented to do so, her anxiety as to the result of her she felt no inclination to eat; every moment that passed, until were converted into realities, was of time. She took a chair in a of the shop, while her friend went down to select his luncheon.

"Do you happen to know, required the curate of the woman standing behind the counter, who occupy the house, No. 15, in

"I do, sir; the family deal with

"The name, I think," said the referring to the card, "is Wilkins

"No, sir; No. 15 is Robinson's woman.

"Indeed! this card, you see the name of C. J. Wilkins, Esq.; the mistake in the number," said the sending the card.

"A lodger, probably, sir. This is a widow lady, who has not been

this street; and, I believe, does take boarders, or lodgers. There are very many in this neighbourhood who resort to such a mode of gaining a livelihood."

"Mrs. Robinson is a respectable person, doubtless?" suggested the curate interrogatively.

"I believe so, sir; but why—if the question is not a rude one—do you inquire?"

The curate briefly stated the object of his visit to —— street.

"Can you describe the appearance of this Mr. Wilkins?" inquired the woman.

The curate did so as well as he could, from what Mrs. Just had told him of his dress and age.

The woman seemed lost in thought for a few seconds, and then whispered to the curate to call by himself, and to leave the lady under her protection, and return for her if his inquiries were satisfactory.

Mrs. Just acceded to this proposal, and while her friend was absent on his errand endeavoured to elicit from the prudent shop-

woman the cause of her suspicion of Mr. Wilkins's character.

She plainly and rather bluntly said she had no cause for suspecting a stranger whom she did not know even by name, but she thought too much caution could be resorted to in a case where a man living in lodgings had appointed to meet a lady to whom he had not required a reference, and to whom he had not given the name of one to vouch for his own respectability.

To this Mrs. Just could offer no objection, and said no more on the subject.

The curate, meanwhile, had obtained entrance at No. 15, and on inquiring for Mr. Wilkins the girl who answered the door seemed to hesitate, as if she was uncertain whether any gentleman of that name dwelt in the house. A parlour-door, however, was opened, and a lady assured the maid "quite right. Mr. Wilkins was the new lodger who came last night and occupied the drawing-room. Pray walk into my parlour, sir, while the maid takes up your card."

The curate had no card with him, but sent up his name, and a request that he might speak to Mr. Wilkins.

The maid returned with a message that Mr. Wilkins would be particularly engaged all that morning, but would be happy to see the Rev. Mr. Milnes, if he would favour him with a call some other day.

The curate sent the girl up stairs again to say that it was of importance that he should see Mr. Wilkins immediately. This produced a request, through the servant, that the gentleman might know the nature of the business on which the clergyman wished to see him. Mr. Milnes begged to be accommodated with a slip of paper, and wrote a note in pencil, saying that he was a friend of Mrs. Just, the lady who wished to be engaged as a governess to Mr. Wilkins's sister.

While the maid was absent, waiting for him to write his note, the curate put a few questions to the lodging-letting lady as to her knowledge of the gentleman who rented her back drawing-room.

" Mr. Wilkins, madam, only to rooms yesterday, if I understood you "

" Only yesterday, sir, for one we liking."

" He is a gentleman, I presume?"

" I never admit any but gentlemen," replied Mrs. Robinson, bridling up her horse with a short bearing-rein on his

" You had satisfactory references," you admitted him, of course, madam

" Of course, sir. My advertisements invariably conclude with ' references changed.' I think, sir, I can boast a respectable list of referees as any landlord takes in gentlemen boarders. There are of my cards, sir, and if you should want any gentleman who is in want of a nice home, where there are no children or nuisances, I shall feel obliged by a recommendation. I breakfast, tea, and lodge lodgers, but don't dine them or wine them though I don't always object to luncheon-table-beer them."

Mr. Milnes put the card into his coat-pocket, and when he had sent

note, inquired "if Mr. Wilkins was a professional man, or in any business."

Mrs. Robinson "could not say, but believed not. The gentleman who had satisfied her of his being an unexceptionable occupier of a back drawing-room, and a bedroom attached, was a lawyer in Staples Inn."

"A barrister, or an attorney?"

"Neither, sir, but a most respectable solicitor," said the lady.

The maid prevented any further inquiries by begging the curate to follow her up stairs, as Mr. Wilkins would see him immediately. He was ushered into the back drawing-room, and received by a person who answered the description given of him by Mrs. Just. He appeared to be a respectable, middle-aged gentleman, having the outward and visible signs of paternity or patruity. On the table before him lay a very few papers, tied up with red or green tape, materials for writing, and an old-fashioned gold snuff-box.

Mr. Milnes explained at some length the object of his visit, and added that from pru-

dential motives, as Mrs. Just had no friends or relations to appeal to, he, as a clergyman and a married man with a family, thought himself fully justified in interfering in her behalf, and seeing that she did not fall into objectionable hands.

Mr. Wilkins listened very attentively, and then smiling most benevolently assured the curate that he held the character of a clergyman of the established church in the greatest possible esteem, and most cordially approved of the caution which he, Mr. Milnes, had exercised upon the present important occasion. The curate bowed, as in duty bound.

“ I did not require a reference from the afflicted lady, sir,” he added, “ because I was fully satisfied with what I heard from her lips ; and from her highly respectable appearance and genteel manners, I judged her to be a person whom I could confidently recommend to my sister to undertake the charge of her interesting children.”

“ The lady, I believe, sir, was so much satisfied with your appearance and the nature

of your proposal, that she did not require any reference from you?"

"She did not; neither did I think it at all necessary to offer any in this stage of the negotiation. I am fully prepared to do so; and were the lady in town, as she promised to be, to meet my sister, this morning, I would...."

"Mrs. Just is in town, sir, and within a few minutes' summons. I left her only a few doors off, while I sought this interview with you."

Mr. Wilkins seemed surprised, and played with the seals and key of a gold watch, which he had placed on the table before him. He then said, as he opened a portfolio and took out a note from between the blotting sheets—

"I need not trouble the lady any further this morning. If you will give her this note from my sister, who is too unwell to come into town at present, and beg her to comply with the proposals it contains, I shall be ready to accompany her to Hammersmith at the hour named. I beg, sir, you will at once in-

form yourself of the proposal letter."

Mr. Milnes read the note, which was in minute lady-like characters. These were these :—

"My dear Brother,

"I am attacked by one of those headaches, and have been forced to send my dear girls in the carriage to Oxford for a few days. I could not bear to hear their dear little tongues, and therefore prescribe perfect tranquillity and rest as the best chance of recovery. Relying on your matured judgment in selecting a respectable person to inform the dear children, I entreat you to send Mrs. Just, the lady whom I have recommended, and whose story I have heard greatly, to accompany you here in my carriage, which I will send to the door. She can go round by Holloway and Highgate. She may as well bring her clothing and moveables with her, as I have no objection to your description of her, that I

admirably, and we can refer to any friend whom she may name while she is staying with me.

“I am, my dear Brother,

“Your affectionate and obliged sister,

“ANGELINA COURTNEY.

“Ivy Cottage, June 10th.”

The curate was quite satisfied with these proposals, and thanked Mr. Wilkins, in the widow's name, for the favourable report of her which he had made to his sister.

Mr. Wilkins smiled benevolently, and begged he would make no further allusions to an act of civility which any serious-thinking Christian would gladly show to a sister in the faith who was in distress. He also begged the curate to take some luncheon with him. This invitation was respectfully declined; and, after a few minutes' conversation, in which Mr. Wilkins managed to impress the curate with an assurance of his being a most respectable, benevolent, and Christian-like person, the bell was rung, and the parties separated, apparently mutually satisfied with each other.

Mrs. Just was very nearly for her friend, and was relieved by walking to the minutes, to see if she could of the door of No. 15 opening his making his exit. At length for moment came; and, as she distinguish his features, she that every thing had turned and that she was no longer the she had been.

Mr. Milnes briefly explained as they walked along, and her on the probability of her being settled.

In the midst of joy or grief, gentlemen must eat and drink. He insisted on the widow's dining turned home. A private room was soon found, and a slight While it was being prepared, herself by casting her eyes at the paper, which the waiters, as they do, placed before her, to pass the time occupied in procuring

Amongst other matters, she saw an advertisement which contained a list of benevolent individuals, who were subscribing a sum of money to relieve the distresses of several families who had lost their all—but their lives and appetites—in “an awful conflagration;” in plain English, a large fire. Among the subscribers’ names appeared :—

£ s. d.

C. J. Wilkins, Esq., by Y. Z., Staple’s

Inn 100 0 0

A. C. ———, by the same . . . 10 0 0

Could there be a doubt that these considerate and charitable persons were *her* Mr. C. J. Wilkins, and his amiable, but nervous sister, Mrs. Angelina Courtney? Mrs. Just thought not; so she showed the advertisement to her friend the curate, who fully agreed with her that she was, indeed, most fortunate in having met with such good Christian-like people.

CHAPTER XX

"Mabel, you hussy, why
pared the blue bedroom, as
said a person, who, from h
might, by some indiscrimin
been called a lady, to an ov
fed, scraggy-looking, maid-

"I can't be in twenty plac
replied Mabel. "I've not
knees all this blessed mornin
the kittle full, light the fir
fast, clean the knives and
the door to the milkman,
butterman, and"

"There, don't talk," sai
do nothing but talk."

"Talk !" replied Mabel,

talk—I haven't time — I'm always scrubbing' and I haven't a soul to talk to. Ever since you left the boards, as you theatricals call the stage, I've been on the boards myself, down on my knees all day long. I was your dresser once, and now I've a dresser of my own—only of a different sort—fitted up with drawers, and”

“Mabel, I will not allow any reference to be made by my maid to any past events in my life,” said the lady, waving her hand, and pointing to the door. “Go and prepare the blue room.”

“Any visitors a-coming?” asked Mabel, without moving, except to rub the surface of a horizontal piano with the corner of her apron.

“You are very impertinent,” replied the lady.

“Is it a man or a woman?” said Mabel, “because I must make the bed according. Males sleep with their heads high, and prefers a matrass in warm....”

“Really this is unbearable—go, go—prepare the bed for a lady.”

"Is it a real lady?—one that
to have things nice?" continued
if it is, I must turn the best
pets uppermost, and carry you
room, and get the best toile
lace edging, and . . ."

"Go—go, Mabel," said the
with her little foot—"the la
spectable person."

"Young or old?" said Ma
she is over forty, she'll put
examine every corner for cob

"The lady is a young pers
at least, younger than myself

"A single woman, a marr
widow?" said Mabel, who w
in rubbing off the marks on t
by the flies. "Becos sing
they're passed a certain age,
cular—married women is mor
are the . . ."

"The lady whom I expe
said the lady.

"Any relation?" inquired
then, maybe, she won't be so

“ A perfect stranger to me.”

“ Is she coming by invitation, or is she to pay for her lodging? If she’s to pay, I think she’ll want a new set of curtains and a new blind to the left window: and the fire-irons is as rusty as”

“ Well, well,” said the lady, “ you are at your old tricks, I see, trying to worm out all the information you can in your own vile, roundabout way—so I may as well tell you all I know myself at once.”

“ Just as well,” said the imperturbable maid. “ I shall never rest till I finds it all out.”

“ Well, then, you must know that my friend, Mr. Courtney, has a relative—a widow woman without a family, whom he wishes to place under my care. She is not quite right in her head, poor thing.”

“ What, a little cracked?” cried Mabel. “ Is it the raving sort or the melancholies?”

“ She is perfectly quiet—no one would discover her affliction who did not know her history. She is the widow of a soldier who fell in battle, and his loss affected her so much,

that she has never been married, and never alludes to her husband, but talks of him as having been a soldier, or some such thing, and having been promoted by promoting the educational classes. She fancies she is new in the world, and is coming to some young ladies."

"What a very queer notice!" said the mistress.
"Is she pretty? because if she is, I would not run the risk of losing you, and she wasn't your girl, at least I would not run the risk."

"Pooh! nonsense! Mabel is not afraid," said the mistress, smiling in a pier-glass, and spinning—go, now, Mabel."

Mabel did go; for she had elicited from her mistress all that she was likely to obtain at present.

When she reached the bedroom, she was about to prepare for the arrival of the stranger, she laid down her broom, and leant out of the window, which looked over a pleasant view to the Thames. She gazed

Surrey hills for a few minutes, shook her head slowly, and thus soliloquized :

“ Well, I can’t quite make it out ; a lady coming to visit my missus for the first time since I’ve lived with her, and that’s some years now ! She’s queer in the head, too, and so she must be to come and live with—but it’s no business of mine. Missus is a good missus to me, and it’s my duty to hear and see everything, and say nothing. That Mr. Courtney’s a sly one ; but he’s pretty good to missus, considering—and she must not quarrel with her bread-and-cheese. She’s not so young as she was, and her dancing days is pretty nigh over, I should guess. Well, to have to wait on a mad woman—a dead sojer’s lady—well ! we shall see what we shall see.”

When Mabel had arrived at this conclusion, she set about preparing the *blue* room in earnest. While she is sweeping and dusting, it will be as well to give my readers a slight insight into her mistress’s past life.

Mrs. Courtney, as she called herself, had been apprenticed by her parents, who held a subordinate situation in the theatre, to a

teacher of dancing, by whom she appeared on the stage, as a figurante, at the opera. She gradually rose in her profession, was engaged at the opera, and became one of the three young ladies who occurred just before the appearance of the male and female dancers, when they executed their *pas de deux*.

Soon after she was out of hospital, her husband lost her parents, whom he supported out of her hard-earned wages. He fell long ill, and took a cheap lodging in the outskirts of London. The widow, however, gained her living as a laundress, and amongst other assistants, had a young girl, foundling from the workhouse, named Mabel, who was shortly promoted to the dignity of dresser to the fair dancer. She attended her nightly to and from the theatre.

For several seasons the poor girl led a correct and virtuous life, and was exposed to numerous and strong temptations, surrounded by vicious companions, in a provincial theatre, where she appeared for the autumnal months as the

cer, she became acquainted with a Mr. Courtney, a man by some years her senior, and yielded to his solicitations to resign her profession and live with him.

It is possible that she would not have made this *false step* had she not made another—on the stage—by which her ankle was so severely sprained, as to make it impossible for her to fulfil her engagement. Poverty stared her in the face. His look was frightful, and she returned to town with her humble friend and servant Mabel as Mrs. Courtney.

Beyond the committal of this one great fault, her conduct was perfectly correct. She admitted no visitors to her cottage but her nominal husband and a music-mistress whom he had engaged to teach her the pianoforte. She knew she was a degraded being in the eyes of the virtuous, but she did not feel her degradation so acutely as she would have done had she received a moral and religious education. All she had been taught was to read and write a little, and to dance a great deal. She had passed her early days in an atmosphere that was seldom enlightened by the

beams of virtue and religion. been early and long accustomed to the ways of licentiousness, and the result was, that she had not fallen early into the mire and filth of vice.

Of Mr. Courtney's history and life she knew no more than he confided to her; that he was a man of good family, and considerable property, who passed the greater part of his life in London. He made her a liberal allowance, which was paid to her regularly through whom she communicated with him whenever she had occasion to write.

Such was Mrs. Courtney's situation at the time she received a letter from him, requesting her to prepare the room occupied by Mr. Courtney on his country estate, for the reception of a man who was not sane, and whom he desired to place in a quiet abode until he could find a proper asylum for her.

This story she implicitly believed. Mabel, who was possessed of a large share of cunning, which she

sightedness, was less disposed to credit the tale that she had extracted from her mistress in her own roundabout way than her mistress herself was.

CHAPTER XX

To return to the widow, lighted zeal did she pack u robe, and how happily did humble friend, the landlady prospects! She was too taste any breakfast, though and urgently pressed to d not sit still long enough t but walked up and down he and looked out of her wi proach of the carriage for s it could possibly arrive, acc fixed by Mr. Wilkins. At gave forth the appointed a few minutes, which seem nutes indeed to the fair e

appointed, sombre-looking chariot was driven to the door of her mean abode, by a staid, steady-seeming coachman, in plain pepper-and-salt livery-coat.

Mrs. Just took one view of the equipage, shook her hostess by the hand kindly—nay, affectionately—for she had been a friend to her in her adversity, and hurried to the door. In a few seconds she was rolling along the Liverpool Road, seated by the side of the quiet and fatherly-looking Mr. Wilkins.

The way along the New Road, Baker Street, Oxford Street, Hyde Park, and Kensington, did not seem long; for Mrs. Just had many inquiries to make, and answers to receive, as to the age and dispositions of her little charges. Mr. Wilkins, too, had much good advice to give her as to the mode of conduct she was to adopt towards his widowed, nervous sister, which he did in a most kind and considerate way.

Mrs. Just could not help comparing him with her former employer, Mr. Deputy Gubbins, and the Deputy lost greatly in her esteem by the comparison. If the sister

proved only one-half as kind as the brother, and the children bled her, the widow felt that she was fortunate indeed.

At length the chariot entered the smithy, and turned to the left. The carriage was left behind, and a glimpse of the road now and then gained, with the sky as a pleasing background to the road was studded with neat little villas, with garden shrubs and flowers before and behind. The meadows smiled in their verdure, the trees nodded their green heads to welcome the stranger to their home.

How her heart fluttered in her bosom as the carriage stopped before the prettiest of all the pretty cottages, and as she was admitted into its neatly-kept parlour by a tidy maid-servant, looking as fresh and scraggy, it is true, and very curious as to the new arrival! That was natural, if the new arrival had observed the scene which she did not, for she was so gaged, she would not have thought of anything else.

extraordinary that a servant-girl should study the physiognomy of a person who was about to become an inmate with her mistress, and to take the charge of her children.

Mr. Wilkins, after speaking a few words to the maid, conducted Mrs. Just into a little back parlour, the window of which opened on to a nice little lawn and flower-garden. The room was tenantless, and her conductor begged of the widow to be seated, whilst he went to see if his invalid sister was well enough to grant her an immediate interview.

When left to herself, Mrs. Just employed herself in examining the apartment. It was neatly but not extravagantly furnished. There were work-boxes and work-bags strewed about it. A handsome pianoforte stood against the wall, and by its side a canterbury or music-rack, well filled with books and unbound songs; but there were no reading-books of any sort, except a few novels and romances, evidently hired from the Hammersmith circulating library. A few engravings of celebrated female dancers hung, suspended by gay-coloured ribbons, from the walls, and

exhibited the human form in a unnatural positions.

In vain did Mrs. Just search of her future pupils. There were no things, no children's books: no low chair or stool was to be seen, and the only thing, too, looked in such "apologetic" manner that it was quite clear the young ladies were not allowed to run about the room themselves in that apartment. They thought the governess, they said, had dated with a room to themselves.

All further investigation was made by the maid-servant, who brought the lady word and begged that the lady would join her for luncheon, and assured her that the governess would join her in a short time.

Mrs. Just thought it strange to be asked to take her luncheon alone; but as she knew the lady was an invalid, and perhaps unable to make her appearance, and that the governess might not be able to leave her for some time, she sat down to a cold chicken and a glass of wine, with a very good appetite, which was not surprising, as she had tasted nothing before on the

What seemed more extraordinary to her was the conduct of the maid, who watched her every movement, and seemed very nervous and fidgety every time she took up her knife, or laid it down again; and, instead of standing near the sideboard, took her station close to the door, which was not closed.

After a time, however, the maid closed the door, and ventured to stand near the table; still, however, exhibiting signs of uneasiness. At length, she ventured to ask the lady a few questions connected with the luncheon, and finally entered into a regular conversation, which consisted chiefly of interrogatories on the part of the maid, to which the lady replied unscrupulously.

We must leave them thus engaged, and follow Mr. Wilkins up stairs into the room where the owner of the pretty little cottage is waiting for his appearance.

“Angelina, my dear, you have managed remarkably well. All, I find, is comfortably arranged for my unfortunate relative.”

“Yes, Courtney,” said the lady, receiving his extended hand, “I have done all as nearly

as I could according to you.
You know that nothing gives me more pleasure as fulfilling your wish.

"I am glad to hear you say so. I had no doubt on the subject of Mr. Wilkins—or Mr. Courtney, for he was known to the person I was conversing—" as I am glad of your willingness to oblige me to do so. My poor relative is worse, and I have engaged a person who is used to the management of the sick, to come over this afternoon to take charge of her. You will only be able if you remain here; and if you run down to Brighton, or some other suitable place, for the few days necessary for her to stay in bed, I will send you a note to pay all your expenses, and I can accompany you, as I shall be obliged for your services."

"I shall like the trip much, but, if I can be of any service to you, lady, pray let me remain."

"On no account whatever

would be unnecessarily shocked. There, summon Mabel, who is below with the invalid, supplying her with refreshments, with a strict charge not to enter into conversation with her. You can ride into town in the chariot, which will return for me in the evening, after I have made all the requisite arrangements."

The bell was rung, and Mabel, to her evident surprise, was ordered to put up a few clothes as quickly as possible, and be ready to accompany her mistress to town in the carriage, and thence by coach to Brighton.

Mr. Courtney did not lose sight of mistress or maid until they were deposited in the carriage, and the coachman was ordered to drive them to Charing Cross, and see them placed in the inside of the afternoon fast coach to Brighton.

"She's no more mad than I am," said Mabel, as soon as the carriage-door was closed. "There's mischief a-brewing, or else I'm mistaken. Such a pretty, nice little woman, too! talks as sensibly as any body I ever heard, and is no more related to your Mr. Courtney than I am."

"You have been talking with me," said Angelina, "although you said you were not to do so?"

"Of course I have," said I. "I have been removing my suspicions from the very beginning. I'm sure of it."

"Sure of what?"

"That the madness is all your own, and that you're made a fool of by Mabel."

What further revelations Mabel, and what mode of conduct by Mrs. Courtney in consequence, I cannot say in the sequel.

Half an hour had elapsed since I was summoned away by the ring, and Mrs. Just was wondering what would come of her conductor, and how long she was to remain alone. At length the footsteps descending the stairs, and the door was opened, and the sound of the departing carriage reached her ears. She thought that Mr. Wilkin was gone, and she thought it was time for her to depart, and she thought it was time for her to do so with

farewell ; but she concluded that his sister, being well enough to see her, had so willed it, and she sat down contented.

She heard the outer door shut, and soon after the handle of the door of the room in which she sat was turned. She expected to see the maid enter to summon her into the presence of her mistress. To her great surprise, the person who entered was — Mr. Wilkins !

But I must not describe the scene that ensued, the details would be too disgusting ; suffice it to say, that Wilkins or Courtney — neither of which names belonged to him but by assumption—was a bold, bad man—a villain, who had laid a trap to ensnare an unprotected, friendless, virtuous woman.

His proposals, threats, and promises, were alike useless. A pure, modest, weak woman, rejected, spurned, and despised them all, and he left the room at her bidding, threatening to confine her until she should have changed her mind. He turned the key in the door after he had quitted her ; and Mrs. Just, though ready to fall down, fainting and exhausted,

put forth all her strength, against the brou sofa, the heavy piano, against it, to prevent his i again. Having accomplis task, her courage forsook on her knees and prayed for of need and necessity. She from the ground and rushed in the hope of escaping, but on the outside. Then the situation occurred to her and she wept like an infant

Several hours passed — bitter thoughts — when the was again turned. The w barricade she had raised against her slight weight to make greater. Great was the exerted to remove the obstacle his admission, but it failed did their duty well. He had prayed earnestly to be admitted purpose. He used the means and uttered imprecations on kept her position, and answered

With a fearful oath, he closed and again locked the door upon her.

But there was the window ! it was fastened without, and, doubtless, might be opened from without. She sprung to it, closed the shutters, and barred them just as she heard a step grating on the gravel-path of the garden. In darkness and intense wretchedness the evening wore away. She heard footsteps above her head, as of a person walking to and fro, and she doubted not they were those of her vile persecutor. Trembling in every limb, she sought the table on which the tray still stood, and, pouring out a glass of wine, drank it, and threw herself on the sofa. She could not sleep ; she doubted not but that the wretch would attempt to gain access to her room again, and she was resolved to resist him again, as she had done before. No attempt was made ; and about midnight, as she conjectured, she tried to sleep to recruit her exhausted strength.

She fell at length into that dreamy state, between sleeping and waking, when the senses are still liable to outward impressions. She

heard distinctly the tread on gravel-path under her window; the fastenings of the window-sash gently opened; this was an attempt to force open the window; it resisted the attempt, and another followed. Mrs. Just, then, aroused from her dreaminess, rose and approached the table. She found a table-knife, resolved to use it against the intruder. She looked at the window; she listened attentively to the voices in whispering colloquy, but could not distinguish the words, but was satisfied that the voices were the voices of the intruders.

Hope revived within her when she thought that it might be made at the suggestion of some females who were of authority.

In a few minutes she heard the shutter; then, after another and another. The loud whisper, said—

“Lady, if you are awake

Mabel—the maid. I am come, with my mistress, to release you.”

Mrs. Just knew the voice, but was afraid to comply with the girl’s request. The same words were repeated louder, and then she heard another voice say—

“Oh, Mabel! we are too late to save her.”

“No,” replied Mabel, “she is here, for I can hear her breathe.”

Mrs. Just hesitated no longer, but gently unbarred the shutter. The moon shone brightly, and Mabel, seizing her by the hand, put her finger to her lips, and pointed to the room above, whence a night-lamp threw a faint, glimmering light upon the blinds. The other female took her other hand, and, bidding her be of good cheer, conducted her to the garden-gate by which they had entered. Here Mabel left them, while she returned to the room to fetch the widow’s bonnet and cloak and one of her boxes, which had been left with her in the morning.

In safety they left the garden, closed the door behind them, and were turning into the lane which led to the highroad (where they

had left the chaise, in which, in the confusion, they had returned, they found only one stage on the road. When two watchmen came to arrest them, they accused them of robbing the cottage, and of attempting to take their booty. In vain did they explain that the cottage belonged to Mrs. Just, who was a friend of theirs, and was going away in a chaise which they had hired.

The watchmen would not believe her, if her story were true, she said she lived at the front door, instead of the back. They seized the females and the children, and knocked at the door of the cottage.

Mr. Wilkins, *alias* Court, appeared in his dressing-gown, and, as he may be easily conceived when he saw the watchmen and his intended victim, and when he fondly thought at Brighton that he was free of the watchmen, and under their protection, he robbed his house. He collected the valuables of the guardians of the peace, and took Mrs. Just, with Mabel and her children, to the watchhouse.

In the morning they were taken before the magistrate, and the whole facts were disclosed. A messenger was sent to summons Mr. Wilkins, *alias* Courtney, but the nest was cold—the bird had flown, and was half-way to Dover, on his road to the continent.

These facts appeared in the public prints of the day, and met the eyes of the good widow of Mount Whistling, who, having communicated with the kind-hearted curate of Finchley, admitted the poor persecuted Mrs. Just into her asylum.

Angelina Courtney, it was believed, returned to the stage, and that Mabel would not desert a mistress with whom she had lived through good and bad report. Some persons have been wicked enough to say, that the curate of Finchley, having heard Angelina's story, and pitying her case, placed her in a situation where she gained an honest livelihood by teaching dancing and music. If he did so, it was a bold but a very meritorious act.

I am fully aware that this little tale will be scoffed at as highly improbable, and by some,

perhaps, deemed improper; are familiar with the reports in our police-courts will easily remember the circumstances that have occurred in the last twelve months, which brought to my remembrance. Truth is often a fiction, and some strange truths come to light before magistrates while they are looking at the particulars of some people.

HIRING A GOVERNOR

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"Now," said my kind friend, Jonathan Sternpost, when he had concluded the adventures of Mrs. Just in search of a governess-ship, "now let us lay out a plan for the amusement of the morrow. What say you to a few hours' shooting?"

"I should like it very well," I replied, "only I have not brought down my own gun with me."

"I can lend you a Joe Manton—a good killer, if it is only held straight," said my friend.

"I am afraid I should not bring down many head of game with it, for, like the carpenter we have heard tell of, I am a bad workman without my own tools. Besides, I

have no shooting clothes with a light summer coat and blouse, stand a very poor chance in the of Mount Whistling."

"That is easily remedied,"

"We are nearly of a size, and an assortment of ready made advertisements say. You will be a culty in rigging yourself out an ear-ring."

"Really," said I, "I do not care about shooting now; I am careless of sport."

"Getting lazy, you mean. Remember the time when you have been all night for fear we should meet in the field on the first of September, me fag so hard all the day, then unable to sleep the next night from fatigue."

"True, true enough," said I, "those days are gone—past—"

"Pooh! pooh!" said Jonathan, "and shall have one day with me, shall be to-morrow, unless it

"But I have no licence," said I, "and I may be informed against, and I cannot afford..."

"Informed against! What! a guest of mine informed against on my own manor! I should like to see the individual who would do it! Rely upon it, he would have to investigate the depth of mud at the bottom of the nearest horse-pond in less than one hour after he had laid his information. Informed against at Mount Whistling! preposterous!"

"*Æquam memento*—don't be in a passion," said I. "Supposing that you are right about my escaping the penalties of the law for shooting with leave, but without licence, I really hate your *battues*—mere bloodshed without excitement; danger without sport. I had rather kill swallows over a fish-pond, or geese on a common."

"Battue!" replied Jonathan, flipping off the white ash of his cigar with the point of his finger. "You know, or at least you ought to know, that I never allow my preserves to be entered, except by the fox-hounds. I mean to have a quiet walk round the out-

skirts of the manor with a pointer, and kill any stragglers to be lying out. A boy and a the game-bag is all my retentions."

"Well, then, I will ride a mark for you," said I.

"No, no, you shall shoot. I upon that, and you have off *virum propositi tenacem*, of which relation would be, if you gave it obstinate old fellow. So to be

To sleep, perchance to die of knocking them down right as used to do in the olden times."

Further expostulation was shook hands with my friend, with ill-judging friends, will insist making pleasure a toil, and room.

I soon fell asleep, but it was of all sorts of dangers and disconnected with shooting. First I not go off; then I lost my po

the top of my shot-belt. After that I fell into a deep ditch, and was nearly suffocated in the mud. My next piece of luck was to shoot old Ponto instead of a hare, and to lodge a charge of shot in my friend's leather gaiters, when aiming at a worthless rabbit. The climax was the bursting of both barrels, and shattering my right hand to pieces. It was but a dream, and I knew it; but I woke in a wretched state. I trembled like an Essex man with an ague upon him, and large drops of perspiration fell from every pore of my body. I felt for my right hand, and, though it was there and uninjured, I could not get over the conviction that it was gone — lost to me for ever — that right hand on which the support and education of a whole flock of little ones depended. I wondered whether I should ever be able to write with my left hand — that is, the hand that was left to me; and I fell asleep again, trying to write backwards on my counterpane.

I awoke almost as soon as it was light, nervous and unrefreshed, with the horrors of my dreams full upon me. I sprung out of bed,

threw up my window, and ho
rain heavily. But, no; the morn
and the first rays of the sun w
the mists, and everything pro
autumnal day.

"This will never do," said I t
give way to this nervous feeling
for a bath."

A few minutes brought me t
few plunges and a run home
me again, and I fitted on a suit
Jonathan's fustians, and made
fast, and a firm determination
execution I could.

We went down by the brook
mity of the manor. The groun
and level with the river. In
full of peat-pits and rush-beds,
pected to find some snipes, but
yet arrived. We could have s
hares, but my friend preserve
marshes for the benefit of hi
keep greyhounds. We found
and those very wild and strong

At length we marked a fine covey into a piece of potatoes.

"Now," shouted Jonathan, "now we shall get some shooting. A shilling on each barrel against the bird."

I did not take the bet, as I knew he was sure of killing if he got a fair shot. I stepped over the hedge, and saw old Ponto as stiff as a dog-vane on a malt-house. We headed him, and up got fifteen or sixteen birds close under our feet. Bang! bang! went Jonathan's gun, and a brace were fluttering on the ground.

"Why did not you shoot?" said Jonathan.

I did not know why, but, to make some sort of an excuse, confidently asserted that they were too far off.

"Humph!" said my friend. "Here, Tom, pick up that brace and bag them; then give me the flask out of your pocket. Humph! too far off, and the birds rose within fifteen yards—in October, too, and out of a piece of potatoes! I see how it is."

Without consulting me, or asking whether the dose would be agreeable or not, he poured

out a glass of real Cognac, a me. I gulped it down, shook I did not like it, and walk birds, which had dropped at off the field. Ponto stood ag brace fell—but not from m that I had “let off my piece neys say, but without any air

“A clever miss,” said Jona it?”

A man must be a bad sport able to frame an excuse for mean a young lady, who can an excuse for herself—but a

“Really,” said I, “these ff—for Jonathan adheres to tind so slow, it is impossible to sl after using a detonator. Th when you pull the trigger, t *phir!* before the report, as m the birds ‘look out—I’m co birds seem to take advantage

Jonathan smiled at the noti ga. He killed several brace one unfortunate old cock, tha

thorn-bush, through which he was trying to escape, was the only victim that I could manage to immolate ; though I felt much disposed to victimize master Tom for grinning at my bad luck.

“Come, this is pretty well for outskirters,” said my friend. “It is about time for a little refreshment, so we will go and give Tit Dowell a benefit. He keeps a stilton and a barrel of strong for his friends ; mount the pony, and let Tom carry your gun.”

“And who,” said I, when I was mounted on old Bob, “is Tit Dowell?”

“Titus Dowell, Esq., of Rose Cottage, as good a fellow and as good a sportsman as ever lived, and ‘hereabouts he dwells.’ He has a small estate of about eighty acres, that skirts my best preserve, and he might play the devil with my pheasants ; but Tit is a gentleman, and never allows a gun to be fired on his land unless he is out with me.”

A scrambling ride through a large oak wood, and up a very steep hill, brought us to a long strip of arable land lying between two coverts. At the top of it was a very neat

cottage, nearly hidden from view and fruit-trees.

Mr. Tit Dowell, who was giving hound puppies a little exercise in caught sight of us, and came to meet the form of an introduction to me he shook me kindly by the hand, and Tom to put the pony up, and get to eat in the kitchen, showed us a room well furnished with sporting foxes' brushes, guns, rods, and sporting articles, and with a small cabinet of stuffed birds and animals.

"I heard you were down in the village," said Tit, "and expected you would be here about mid-day, so sit down and be comfortable."

Cold chickens, a gammon of bacon, and stilton, with lots of salad and juice of lemon, and cider and claret cups, were not unpalatable after a warm walk, and an unsuccessful day's shooting—as far, at least, as I was concerned. Of course I had to stand by my friend Jonathan to aim his shafts at the partridge, and, to crown all, he would have me show him the old cock bird I had killed, to see

no I had not merely frightened him to death by my propinquity.

I stood it all very well, for a man does not mind trifles when his stomach is comfortably garrisoned with good things. I laid my want of skill entirely to the using of a tinder-box gun, and said nothing about my nerves being unsettled by dreams; for neither Jonathan nor mine host of Rose Cottage could have been able to understand my feelings. They had nerves, doubtless, but were never nervous.

Mr. Tit, I suspect, thought that my laying the blame of my want of success on the flint and steel was a mere excuse for want of skill. He offered to lend me any one of his numerous percussion-guns that hung over the fireplace. I gladly embraced the offer, and selected a small double gun, short in the stock, and rather straight, which I thought would suit my shoulder. I tried it, and felt that I could "go in and win."

"Now for the long tails," cried Jonathan. "Bring your gun, Tit, and we'll try the spinnies. You may kill some hares there, as

coursing is out of the question
sures, and I want a few brace for
sents. Your Londoner always l
size of your game-basket, and
quails are thrown away on him."

Tit declined shooting, but said
and mark for us. Tom was moun
pony, and away we went to a
manor I had not before visited.

"You dine at the Mount, Tit, to
Jonathan.

"Certainly. I arranged with
keeper to do so, as soon as I hear
out in the marshes," replied M
"And now, sir, do you push on to
of this withy-bed, and you, Sternpos
to the other, and I will walk up the
old Ponto."

I did as I was bidden, and just
my station—whirrh! whirrh! ba
and down tumbled two fine cock
from my gun.

"Dead?" shouted Jonathan.

I did not reply, but, having loa

knocked down another long tail, and a hare that came tit-upping by me.

“Dead?” again shouted my friend, but still no answer.

I knew if I spoke I should make the game, who were creeping through the covert towards me, aware of my whereabouts, and I was now all for slaughter, to retrieve my lost reputation. I felt like a young soldier who has been unsuccessful in his first battle, and means to make up for his deficiency in killed and wounded by murdering as many as he possibly can the first opportunity he has.

Not to tire my reader, we had some excellent sport, and I shot capitally. Indeed, I only missed one shot, and that, luckily, was Tom's hat, with his head inside of it. He was bobbing it up and down just above the pommel of his saddle, being rather sleepy from the imbibition of a little too much of Mr. Tit Dowell's strong beer. I really took it for a cock pheasant unwilling to quit covert, and had only time enough to throw my barrels up and thus miss my mark, as

Master Tom rolled quietly over old Bob's head upon the grass.

As this narrow escape was witnessed by Mr. Tit Dowell and Jonathan, I was again food for mirth; but the tables were turned on the latter when my victims were counted and found to surpass his in number by some seven or eight head. To me, however, had been assigned the post of honour, and Jonathan was not jealous of my having maintained it like a man.

Two brace of pheasants and a brace of hares were left at Mr. Tit's, as we passed his cottage on our way home, and while he was changing his dress to accompany us, we sat in the porch and finished the cool tankard of claret, which certainly is a most delicious tippie in hot weather.

Dear public, I am sure you will like my recipe for it. Here it is—

CLARET CUP.

Take one bottle of pure Bordeaux wine, and put it into a large silver cup, with half a pint of cold spring water. Stir into it a large

table spoonful of moist sugar, and throw over it a little nutmeg grated, and cinnamon, all-spice and cloves, pounded. Add a few thinly pared shreds of lemon *peel*, and a branch of borage—or, if that sweet flowering plant be not comeatable, the rind of a small cucumber. Put that to your lips, and, if there are more than three to come after you, do not speedily remove it. Rely upon it you will not get a *second* chance. Do not forget, however, to “pledge *me* in the cup.”

This delicious draught, and a gentle walk back to the Mount, followed by Master Tom seated on old Bob, amidst his well-filled game-bags, made us quite prepared to do justice to the fare provided for us by the fair Mrs. Sternpost.

CHAPTER XL.

The worthy parson of the parish made a fourth after the retirement of our hostess. He could not join us at dinner, as he was engaged in presiding over a vestry meeting, held by adjournment at the little village inn, where, to benefit the industrious landlord, a leg of mutton had been ordered to be dressed by the farmers. The rector rather promoted such little junketings, as they did good to the poor of the parish, by enabling him to bring their respective cases before their respectable employers, and promoted peace and goodwill among men by rubbing off those little asperities which are sure to be engendered where men are kept apart, or jostle against each other only over the dry details

of business. He was glad, however, to retire at an early hour to a glass of cool claret, in exchange for red-hot punch, the favourite vestry-meeting cordial, and the prospect of a quiet rubber with the Squire and Tit Dowell. He was wise enough to think that abusing painted bits of pasteboard for not using him kindly, was far preferable to abusing his neighbours and friends by talking or listening to scandal concerning them; into which personal criticisms will naturally degenerate.

We had our coffee early, played some half dozen rubbers, and then retired to the library to enjoy our cigar and a little chat before retiring.

People will and may call smoking a dirty and extravagant habit, and so it may be if carried to excess, but commend me to one or two good cigars, or a pipe of canaster with a friend, particularly after a day's shooting or fishing; it rests the limbs, calms the overstrained nerves, and gives a zest to conversation.

We found it have these effects upon this

occasion. We were as happy and as cheerful as any four moderate disciples of Epicurus could be under any circumstances. We talked, we laughed, we—no, we did not sing—we told anecdotes, stories, and adventures—all of us by turns, and none of us at too great length, which is the real secret of good fellowship, after all.

It must be owned that Tit Dowell was thrown a little in the back-ground; for the squire, the rector, and myself, being all Oxford men, rather dwelt upon tales of college life, and brought to each other's recollection tales and personages of other days at the university. My good friend Jonathan, with his usual tact, saw this error, and remedied it by throwing the ball into Tit's hands and causing him to "give tongue" upon the splendid runs of the last season, lucky days with the woodcocks, snipe, and wild fowl, and other matters of great local interest. On these subjects Tit was at home, and was very eloquent.

"You do not think of letting Rose cottage

for the shooting this year, then?" inquired the squire, with a very peculiar look and a quiet laugh, in which the rector joined.

Tit looked first at the one and then at the other, shook his head, and smiling said,

"I see, squire, you wish me to tell your friend here the little adventure of my father in letting his house. Well, he shall have it, although it does not redound much to the credit of my governor's prudence or foresight."

You must know, sir, that when the Admiral was living—it is some years ago now, while I was at school and the squire was at college,—that my father, who was a little testy, had a slight quarrel with his neighbour, the Admiral. What it was about neither could clearly tell; but, whatever it was, they ceased to be as intimate as they had been, though each loved and respected the other as much as ever. It might have blown over if they had met without any one being present to witness their meeting; and a hearty "good morning" and a shake of their hands would have terminated

hostilities, and placed the parties on the same good footing as before.

It happened, otherwise, however. They met at a gentleman's house in the neighbourhood—a large party was assembled at a hunt dinner—a great deal of wine was drunk. Some observation, late in the evening, roused the anger of the Admiral, who directed all his hardest blows at my father, who returned them with interest. The company were amused, and encouraged them in their quarrel, until they thought the quarrel might lead to serious results.

When, therefore, the Admiral called my father a regular-built landlubber, and my father returned the compliment, by assuring him that he had no more sense than a sea-shark, every one interfered. The Admiral was tumbled into his carriage at the front gates, and my father placed on his pony at the back entrance, and both sent home by different roads, though their path lay the same way.

When they awoke in the morning, both, I am sure, regretted what had taken place, and would gladly have blotted it out from

their memories. They neither of them dreamed of calling the other to account for words spoken over the wine-cup, nor would either of them be the first to hold out the right hand of reconciliation. Still all might have been well, had not the ladies in their zeal for a restoration of good feeling, or from fear of serious consequences, imprudently interfered.

The Admiral, not very gallantly, assured my mother, that "if ever he heard of Titus Dowell shooting or hunting on his grounds again, he would exchequer him as sure as he was born;" and my father, with equally bad taste, told Mrs. Sternpost that "he would be hanged if he would not shoot and hunt just when and where he pleased, and, moreover, would kill every head of game in the preserves, and sow all his land with buckwheat, to draw out the pheasants."

Both were sorry for these speeches; for the Admiral was but little of a sportsman; and my father, like myself, I trust, a *fair* sportsman, and neither cared a pin for the game, except for the sport it afforded. Still the words were spoken. The Admiral served

his neighbour with a notice not to trespass on the grounds of Mount Whistling, and my father ploughed up several acres just under the chief preserve, and planted it with that pheasant-alluring grain called buckwheat.

As the shooting-season drew near, my father's heart failed him. He could not make up his mind to annoy his old friend, or to kill the pheasants himself. Still he was resolved to procure the doing of both through a third party — but how was this to be effected? None of the neighbours would aid or abet him in his intentions, for all respected the Admiral and himself too greatly, to add fuel to the fire, that they would gladly have extinguished.

He hit upon the plan of going to another little estate of ours in Monmouthshire, and letting Rose Cottage to strangers, as a shooting and hunting-box for the season.

The Admiral was sorely grieved when he saw in his London paper an advertisement worded thus :—

“TO BE LET for the season, a snug SHOOTING AND HUNTING BOX, called Rose Cottage.

The shooting extends over but a few acres, but they are planted with buckwheat, and in the heart of the well-stocked preserves of Admiral Sternpost. Two packs of hounds within reach. Early application to be made to Titus Dowell, Esq., Rose Cottage, near Mount Whistling, Somersetshire."

Several applications were made by return of post. Among them was one from Captain Smith, of the —th regiment of foot.

He was a bachelor, and willing to give liberal terms for his accommodation, and the shooting over the eighty acres; although, as he said, his principal object was hunting with the two packs alluded to in the advertisement. He could not, however, come to terms without inspecting the house, stables, kennels, and the country.

A warm invitation from my governor brought Captain Smith to the cottage. He was a tall, fine-looking, middle-aged gentleman, dressed quietly in a blue surtout-coat and black stock; he wore very bushy whiskers, and well-trim-

med moustaches; he dined, and staid the night. On the following morning every thing was arranged. He was to bring his own servants, horses, dogs, and wines, and to have the use of our family plate, and house, and table-linen. All was to be in readiness for him by the first of September.

Captain Smith expressed himself perfectly satisfied with this arrangement, and was to pay £100 for six months' use of the cottage and its conveniences. He left for London, and my father prepared every thing for his reception, and for his own removal into Monmouthshire. He was much pleased with his tenant, and chuckled as he thought how he would knock down the Admiral's partridges and pheasants.

Well, the thirtieth of August arrived, and with it Captain Smith, a brace of fine hunters, a groom in a dark gray livery, and a cockade in his hat. A neat dog-cart contained a brace of handsome setters, and a retriever. A cart from Bristol brought over another man-servant, a cook, and sundry packages and hampers. On the evening before the first, ano-

ther buggy or dog-cart arrived at the cottage, containing two more gentlemen, who looked, from their costume, as military as their entertainer.

On the first, the whole party took the field late in the day, and shot for an hour or two without going out of bounds, and without doing much execution, although the birds were plentiful.

The Admiral's keeper watched their proceedings, and reported to his master that their dogs were not worth a penny a-piece, and that their owners shot worse than a parcel of tailors.

In the course of the week, several strangers, all of the same description of men, passed to and from the cottage. How they amused themselves during the long days was a puzzle to their neighbours, none of whom, under the peculiar circumstances of his arrival in the country, thought fit to call upon and offer any civilities to the captain and his friends. Some days not a gun was fired on the farm, and when the party did go out, it was only for an hour or so, and then apparently for the

sake of killing time, rather than partridges or hares.

The farmers were too busy with the harvest, and the gentry too much occupied in shooting, to trouble themselves about inquiring into the mysteries of Rose Cottage.

The keeper, however, learned from a lad, who had been engaged from the village to help in the stable, that the principal amusement of the gentlemen "up at Cottage" was gaming and drinking. The dice-box was rattling, or the cards flying about from morning till late at night, and sometimes all night long. Dozens of wine and boxes of cigars were consumed, and serious altercations—not attended with serious results, however—were continually occurring.

This the keeper reported to his master; but the Admiral told him not to trouble himself about any thing but his duties, adding, that, if he could only catch the captain or his friends trespassing on his land, and lay an information before him as a magistrate, he would double his allowance of grog.

No trespass, however, was committed by

any one of the party, and things progressed as usual at the Cottage and at the Mount, until one day, as the Admiral was strolling through the Home Wood towards the spot where the Widows' Almshouse now stands, he was overtaken by a young gentleman, apparently of seventeen or eighteen years of age, dressed plainly in a blue surtout. His upper lip bore an incipient moustache, and his whole appearance was of a military character.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the young man; "but I have wandered about in these beautiful woods until I have lost my way—Could you kindly direct me to Rose Cottage?—to Captain Smith's?"

The Admiral looked handspikes and great guns at the youthful intruder, and was about to reply somewhat briefly and rudely, by ordering him off his grounds; but the young man who had just gained the opening in the woods, whence that splendid view over the Severn is obtained, burst out into such a rapturous encomium on the beauties of the landscape as disarmed the owner of the estate of

his anger, and he found himself chatting away confidentially with the stranger, and pointing out to him the views about his manors, of which he was justly proud.

About a quarter of an hour had passed in this way, when the young man, touching his hat, thanked the Admiral for the information he had given him about the surrounding country, and begged him to direct him to Rose Cottage.

The Admiral's face, or at least the expression of it, changed immediately from the courteous to the severe.

"Young man," said he, "you are evidently a gentleman, although you are trespassing most unwarrantably on my property. May I venture to ask your name?"

"Certainly—most certainly—there is my card, and I am sincerely sorry for having been involuntarily guilty of such rudeness."

The Admiral took the card, and read—
Ensign the Honourable C. Tiverton, —th regiment.

"Tiverton—Tiverton! What the son of my old shipmate on board the Redoutable?"

“My father is a naval man, sir. May I venture to inquire your name?”

“Sternpost, my boy — Sternpost — now Admiral Sternpost.”

“I have often heard my father speak of you, sir, as Captain Sternpost, under whom he served as ...”

“First luff — quite right — come — come along home with me — I live hard by here, down at the Mount. Where’s your kit? Stay for a month — glad to see the son of an old friend.”

Mr. Tiverton thanked him for his kind invitation, but declared that it was impossible for him to accept it until he had paid a promised visit to Captain Smith, with whom he was engaged to dine that day with a brother officer, who had driven his buggy round from Bath, where their regiment was quartered. He had preferred to walk the latter part of the way through the woods, having been attracted by the beauty of the scenery.

“And who is Captain Smith? A militia-man, or one of the regulars?”

“ Oh! the latter, I believe, but he is not of ours. A very gentlemanly fellow—met him in Bath—indeed, he messed with us more than once. He invited me and young Feather-ton, of ours, to dine and shoot over a little farm, close to the preserves of a queer old gig ...”

“ Meaning *me*,” said the Admiral; “ but never mind.”

The young man blushed and commenced an apology, but the Admiral shook him by the hand, and, having directed him across the common to the Cottage, bade him have his dinner and his shooting, and then come to the Mount, and bring his friend Feather-ton with him to dinner on the morrow; and so they parted.

Mr. Tiverton found his way to the Cottage by the *bearings* which the Admiral had given him, and there met his friend Feather-ton, a young ensign of his own age, rank, and means, Captain Smith, and two gentlemanly-looking men to whom they were introduced.

A neat dinner, very excellent wines, and a good dessert were followed by a little whist

for "merely guinea points." About ten o'clock, broiled bones, devilled kidneys, and champagne-punch were introduced; and, after supper, whist was again resumed.

Tiverton and Featherton were partners against Captain Smith and one of his friends. The other declined playing, saying he would rather look on and help his friends to punch, which he did very zealously.

Here we must leave the pleasant little party so pleasantly engaged, and accompany the Admiral's keeper to the covert skirting the Cottage farm, where he had found some wires set a day or two before.

It was about three o'clock in the morning, and he was lying up in a dry ditch, watching one of the wires, in which was a strangled hare, when he heard the sound of wheels approach the gate, at the end of the covert, from the cottage. This was shortly followed by another sound of wheels, and then by the footsteps of two or three horses. He took no notice of this, however, as he thought it proceeded from some of the visiter's gigs and

horses, which were frequently going to and from the cottage at all hours.

About five o'clock, just as day was beginning to dawn, he left his hiding-place, fully satisfied that the poacher would not come to take up his snares till night came again. He walked out of the wood into a road which led to the cottage, and, looking over the gate, saw some one running towards him. It proved to be the young lad who had been taken as helper in the stables. He was very pale, and looked very much alarmed. He begged the keeper to go back with him to the Cottage, for that "something was the matter. Somebody had broken into the stables, and stolen all the horses, buggies, and carts, for they were all gone but the one belonging to the young men who had come down to dine the day before."

The keeper went back with the lad, and found his statement to be true. He went to rouse Captain Smith, to inform him of his loss, but no Captain Smith was to be found. All had fled, save Ensigns Tiverton and Feather-ton, who were discovered in a sleep resem-

bling death, lying, the former on a sofa, the latter on the hearth-rug.

It is needless to add, that they had been robbed of money and checks to a large amount by three regular swindlers, who had laid a deep and well-devised plot for their destruction, which they accomplished, and got clear off with their booty—and not only that booty, but all my father's plate and valuable moveables, which they carried away, after having broken open his cellars, and drunk all his excellent wines.

So much for letting a shooting-box to a "very gentlemanly man," without demanding "respectable references." My father and the Admiral were shortly afterwards better friends than ever, though the sailor would now and then, over his wine, ask him if he meant to let the shooting and his cottage for the season.

"Bravo," said Jonathan, "you tell the tale well; and, as you seem in the vein, and the night is young, you cannot do better than relate to my friend and to our worthy rector, who, I believe, has never heard it, the tale of your friend Mrs. St. Eustace's runaway match.

She is," said he, addressing me, "the dark lady, whose melancholy looks attracted your notice at Mrs. Lauderley's board the day we dined there."

CHAPTER XLI.

Mr. Titus Dowell lighted a fresh cigar, and thus began :—

Among the many passengers on board the East India Company's good ship the Hindoostan, on her homeward bound voyage from Calcutta, were three children, attended by two nurses, the one an Englishwoman, and the other a native Indian. Of these children the two eldest were boys of the respective ages of seven and eight years, and the youngest was a girl of six. From the colour of their complexions, which was nearly as dark as that of their native nurse, any one would fairly have concluded that they were born of parents one of whom was a Hindoo. Such was the case.

Their father, a Mr. Maclieven, was the cadet of a respectable family in Gloucestershire. His godfather, who was possessed of considerable interest with the great guns of Leadenhall Street, succeeded in procuring for his little responsibility one of those snug appointments in the civil service in the East called writerships, and, having paid his passage out, and paid also for an outfit, rested fully satisfied that he had made his suretyship sure, and done all that godfathers and godmothers are expected to do for one to whom they give a name at his baptism.

Mr. Maclieven did not idle away his time, but worked hard at his profession. His exertions were crowned with a speedy reward. At an early age he was promoted to a situation in one of the island dependencies of the company with a very liberal salary, and some pretty perquisites attached to it.

Here he formed one of those connexions which used to be formed in the eastern hemisphere, and which may continue to be so formed even now for all I know to the contrary. He fell in love with a Hindoo lady

of very high caste and very tender years, who unhesitatingly consented to become his wife, without going through those ceremonies usually insisted upon by ladies in this country.

By this lady he had several children ; and, when they were deemed of sufficient age for the purpose, he remitted the three eldest of them to England to his brother's care, to be educated and properly brought up.

They arrived safely through storm and calm at Falmouth, and were speedily conveyed in hired carriages to the place of their destination, Broadly Hall, in the county of Gloucester, and were embraced by their uncle, who introduced them to their little cousins, who wondered very much indeed why their faces were not properly washed, they looked so very sooty ; attributing it, however, not so much to the negligence of their nurses as to the scarcity of soap and fresh water at sea.

The boys were sent off to school immediately ; and, as they have but little to do with my story, it will be as well to get rid of them for the present by telling you that, having received a *quantum sufficit* of Latin and Greek

at a public school, and a slight smattering of Hindoostanee and Persian at the college instituted for that purpose, they were sent back to the East with appointments — the one, the eldest, with a cadetship, and the other a writership.

The girl, Amabelle, was placed by her uncle in the nursery with his own children, and educated by their governesses. The native nurse remained with her little charge for some weeks; but, finding herself not very comfortable—for she was grievously tormented by her young persecutors, who thought it rare fun to pinch her, and stick pins and needles into her, to see if black people had any feeling—she returned to her native country with a family going out to Calcutta who wanted a native *bonne*.

The little Amabelle was truly grieved at her departure, for she was left among strangers, who, though kind to her after their manner, were unused to her ways, and unwilling to submit to the waywardness of her temper and her tyrannical disposition. Moreover, they nicknamed her *dusky face*, which

seriously offended her ; but they only laughed at the proofs of her anger, exhibited in her flashing, large, oriental eyes, and the indignant curl of her lip, which displayed two rows of small teeth, vieing with the pearl in whiteness.

Children are assuredly adepts in the art of ingeniously tormenting ; and little Amabelle was but one among a little host who vied with each other in inventing methods of rendering her as uncomfortable and as angry as possible.

In vain did she stamp her little foot ; in vain did she threaten to strike them with her tiny hand—they only laughed the louder, and danced round her in a circle, calling her passionate little dusky face, until her passion relieved itself by a gush of tears. Then, children-like, they repented of having carried their torturing too far, and would have embraced her and kissed away her tears, if she had permitted them, but she would not. She spurned them from her, and, rejecting all offers of consolation in the shape of toys or sweetmeats, would sit sulking in a corner by

herself, until her little tormentors began their tortures again.

Did she complain to the governesses, or her uncle and aunt of her sufferings? No. Her proud spirit forbade it. She took the law into her own hands, and found opportunities of making them pay the penalties they had incurred.

Miss Mary's best wax doll was found with its pretty ringlets torn off, and its pretty blue eyes scooped out of the sockets. Master Tom's watch, "that went," was smashed to atoms. George's drum was cut almost to ribbons, and picture-books, playthings, and favourite frocks and bonnets were torn, soiled, and scattered about in all directions.

So sly was she in all her movements, that Amabelle was never detected in the fact of committing these retributive acts of injustice, and, when accused of them, she never owned or denied her guilt, but sat smiling, with malicious satisfaction, at the grief and dismay she had caused.

With the governesses she was no favourite, although she learnt her lessons and did

her task readily and well. Mrs. Maclieven, her aunt, was too great an invalid to see much of her own children or her niece. She had been very careful in the selection of her governesses, and to them she left the entire management of the little troop. The squire, though a very affectionate father in his way, was too much occupied with turnip-sowing, planting larch, spruce, and other fir-trees on his waste lands, and acting as a justice of the peace, to inquire minutely into the nursery regulations and proceedings.

He treated his little niece very kindly, and, if he made any difference at all between her and his own offspring, it was to show her rather more kindness and attention than he did to them, as the child of a brother whom he had always loved dearly. Amabelle, however, received his little favours merely as her due, and felt no attachment whatever to him who conferred them. Truly, she was neither a loving nor a loveable child.

As to a religious principle within her, she had none. It was not very likely that any such should have been instilled into her by

her mother; and now, at Broadly Hall, though she learnt her catechism and read her bible, she did both as mere tasks of memory, and reading long and hard words. That the eye of One was constantly upon her, and watching all her thoughts, words, and deeds, was what she could neither comprehend nor believe.

With her parents in the East, she kept up a half-yearly correspondence "upon compulsion;" but her letters were mere formal compositions, written under the eyes of, and dictated and corrected by, her governesses. She never poured out the warm, unrestrained feelings of a child's heart, or felt for her parents more than she would have done for strangers, with whom chance had made her acquainted.

Thus passed the childhood of Amabelle Maclicieven. At the age of fifteen she lost her aunt, who died of consumption, leaving her good, kind husband inconsolable for her loss, and father of ten motherless children, the eldest of whom was Mary, about the same age as her cousin.

The squire, by the advice of his friends, sent three of his boys to school, and engaged the services of a widowed lady, of mature age, to preside over his household, and take the head of his table. To this lady, who was of a very serious turn of mind, and a rigid disciplinarian, Amabelle, on the very first day of her introduction to the family, took a most unconquerable dislike. She hated her at first sight; *why* she would have been puzzled to explain; but she did hate her, and rejected every little attention and kindness she seemed willing to confer upon her with coldness, and almost with disdain. Mrs. Delaval was surprised and grieved at her conduct, but trusted to time to discover to her the causes of it, and to remove them.

One of Mrs. Delaval's first acts on taking upon herself the management of Mr. Mac-lieven's family, was to recommend the attendance of masters in the arts of music, drawing, and dancing, as she found that the elder girls had learnt all that the governesses could teach them in those accomplishments, which are deemed absolutely necessary to be acquired

by little ladies, whether they have the talents within them necessary for their acquirement or not.

Broadly Hall was within a few miles of Cheltenham, and, although that watering-place had not acquired the celebrity which it now enjoys, it was already "in vogue," and boasted of many professors of the fine arts among its residents.

After a most rigid scrutiny into their merits and respectability by Mrs. Delaval, three gentlemen were engaged to "finish off" the young ladies of Broadly Hall in dancing, music, and drawing.

To one of these only it will be necessary to call the attention of my readers—the professor of music and singing.

Mr. St. Eustace, whose real name was East, but who had assumed a finer name without royal leave or licence, from prudential motives, was a *fine* young man, in every sense of that ill-used word. He had a fine face, a fine person, and finer clothes. His voice was fine; he had a fine touch on the piano, and he made a fine income by instruct-

ing young fashionables at one guinea per lesson, and conducting concerts given in private parties and at the public rooms.

With his pupil, Amabelle, Mr. St. Eustace was much struck ; not so much on account of her very pretty figure, rather pretty face, and magnificent black eyes and hair, as on account of her skill in music, and her rich melodious voice, which he foresaw, if properly cultivated, would add to his already high reputation as a teacher.

He took greater pains with her than with his other pupils at the Hall, and it was not to be wondered at that he did so. It was natural that a tutor should devote more care and attention to a pupil who appeared likely to do greater credit to his care and attention.

Amabelle, who was an enthusiast in the arts he taught, was much pleased with Mr. St. Eustace. She devoted more of her time to music and singing than she did to drawing, which she disliked, and to dancing, which she rather despised, although she excelled in it. She gladly looked forward to and hailed the

day which brought Mr. St. Eustace's very neat buggy, fine horse, and well-dressed groom to the Hall-door; and the lesson in singing was prolonged far beyond the *one hour*, for which the one guinea was charged and paid. Both master and pupil were so anxious to become perfect in certain duets which they sang together, that Mr. St. Eustace was frequently obliged to stay beyond his time, to the disappointment and neglect of some less favoured pupil.

As to Mr. St. Eustace, out of his character of her instructor, Amabelle admired him, but that was all. She thought him a superior individual of the species *homo*, but as to falling in love with him, the notion never occurred to her. That Amabelle MacIver, the daughter of a man high in office, and of a Hindoo of the highest caste, should love a mere jingler of ivory keys, and a paid utterer of sweet sounds, was too preposterous a notion! Her proud heart would have rebelled within her bosom if such a thought had occurred to her; but it did not until Mrs. Delaval foolishly, but with the best and purest

intentions, suggested to her the possibility, if not probability, of such an event.

“ Amabelle, my dear, you appear to me to devote far more time to your music and singing than to your other studies.”

“ I do, madam. I love music and singing better than any thing in the world,” said Amabelle.

“ That is a strong expression ; but, passing over that, I would suggest to you the propriety of devoting a little more time to your other masters,” said Mrs. Delaval, kindly.

“ I do all that they set me to do. They cannot accuse me of neglect,” said the young Indian, proudly.

“ That is true, I allow. You pass the one hour with them, but it seems an irksome one ; but Mr. St. Eustace is seldom dismissed until the one hour is prolonged to two, and sometimes to three. Some people might say ...”

“ Might say what, madam ?” inquired Amabelle, with flashing eyes.

“ Nay—nay—do not be excited, dear girl ; I merely meant to give you a hint that some ill-natured people might attribute your exces-

sive zeal less to the charms of the art itself than to the—the ...”

“The what, Mrs. Delaval? Pray speak out.”

“Than to the personal charms of the teacher.”

“Well, madam, pray go on; finish the insult,” said Amabelle.

“I mean not to insult you, but to put you on your guard. You are young, pretty, and enthusiastic. Mr. St. Eustace is a very handsome man, and it has happened before now, and may again, that a tutor and his pupil have taken parts in a duet for life. You understand me. If such an event were to occur in this family, the blame would fall upon me. I must, therefore, if a little less attention is not shown by a certain young lady to one of her masters, and a little more to the others, acquaint her uncle with my ideas on the subject.”

When Mrs. Delaval had concluded this injudicious speech, Amabelle gave her one long look of the deepest scorn, and left the room.

“ St. Eustace, my lad,” said the professor of painting and drawing, as he sat over a glass of wine with his friend, “ you seem to be rather sweet on your oriental pupil at the Hall. She is a sweet pretty girl—eh? but devilish dull.”

“ Dull! you are joking; she is one of the cleverest pupils I ever had. I devote more time to her than I ever did to any young lady.”

“ So every body says, and she seems to devote a greater portion of her time to you than to any body else. It would not be a bad spec—eh?”

“ Spec? What do you mean?”

“ Why, you do not mean to live single all your life; and the daughter of a rich Indian Nabob, and the niece of the rich lord of the broad acres of Broadly Hall, would not be an undesirable Mrs. St. Eustace.”

“ Gad!” said the music-master, glancing at his fine person in a mirror, “ it is not a bad idea. It never occurred to me before. I will think upon it.”

About a month after the above-related con-

versations took place, a chariot, with four spanking posters attached to it, might have been seen at the corner of a shady lane skirting the deer-park of Broadly Hall. Across the park a young lady hurried, despising the dank dews on the high grass, and, opening a small wicket-gate, was embraced by a handsome young gentleman, and handed into the carriage, which was driven off at a five-guineas-a-stage pace. When Mr. MacIeven summoned his niece to breakfast, she was many stages on her road to Gretna.

The reader must seek in the next chapter for the result of this

RUNAWAY MATCH.

CHAPTER XLII.

Great was the consternation at Broadly Hall when the flight of Amabelle was discovered. The family assembled at breakfast, and all were there save the Indian cousin. The squire, who never sat down to his morning meal until all his little party were ready to join him, ordered his servant to summon Amabelle, who was the only one not present. The man despatched the ladies'-maid to her bedroom. She soon returned with the information that the room was empty. The squire, imagining that his niece might be walking in the park or gardens, ordered the dinner-bell to be rung. This was done, loudly and long, but without the expected result.

“Dear me! it is very odd,” said the squire

—"very rude, too. Has no one seen Amabelle this morning?"

No one had seen her.

"Run, Mary, my dear, and question the maid who waits upon her."

Mary obeyed, and learned from the girl that she had gone into the young lady's room at the usual hour, and found that she had already risen, and, as she concluded, dressed herself and gone out for an early walk. As this was not an unusual occurrence, she neither thought nor said any thing about it.

As soon as Mary had communicated this negative information to her father, he sent for all his domestics and questioned them. None of them had seen Miss Amabelle. The only one who had anything to communicate was the upper housemaid, who, on going into the drawing-room to open the shutters, had found the glass-door, which led into the conservatory, open, and the door of the conservatory itself unlocked.

Mrs. Delaval turned exceedingly pale, and beckoned to Mary to follow her from the breakfast-parlour, whilst the squire was giving

orders to the men-servants to search the park and grounds, to call at the lodge, and make inquiries in the village.

As soon as they were in the hall, Mrs. Delaval whispered her suspicions—that Amabelle had eloped with Mr. St. Eustace—to Mary. She was greatly shocked that her friend should entertain so degrading an opinion of her cousin, and refused to believe that she could be guilty of such a piece of folly, or madness as she termed it.

Mrs. Delaval shook her head sorrowfully, but, before she mentioned her suspicions to the squire, she resolved to send to Cheltenham, and ascertain if the gay Lothario was to be found. She called aside one of the grooms, and bade him mount a fleet horse, and ride over to Mr. St. Eustace's lodgings as quickly as he could, and request his attendance at the Hall. The man obeyed; and as soon as she had seen him gallop off down the avenue, Mrs. Delaval returned with Mary to the breakfast-room. The meal passed slowly and uncomfortably, amidst the wonderings and conjecturings of every one except the two eldest

ladies of the party, who sat pale and agitated, but said nothing.

Just as the breakfast was over, Mrs. Delaval heard the noise of a horse's feet, and, rightly conjecturing that her messenger had returned, left the room, to hear in private the result of his hasty journey.

"Mr. St. Eustace was not at home. He had left Cheltenham for a fortnight, on a distant journey to see his friends."

Such was the message sent by the good woman of the house wherein the professor of music lodged.

Mrs. Delaval's suspicions were no longer such, but "confirmations strong." She desired the butler to tell his master that she wished to speak to him immediately, in his own room, where she took her seat, tremblingly awaiting his coming.

Now the squire of Broadly Hall was not what is termed a passionate man, though a little hasty at times, and rarely indulged in using naughty words and wicked oaths; but when Mrs. Delaval had informed him of all her reasons for being sure that his niece had

eloped with her music-master, he certainly forgot himself. He called her, Mrs. Delaval, a negligent old —— (something very shocking) for permitting such an event to take place. He abused his niece as a nasty, proud, black —— (un-natural natural daughter), and the partner of her flight as a squalling, piano-thrumming, scheming vagabond. He then sallied out into the hall and kitchen, and upbraided every servant whom he ran against, for having conspired against his peace of mind and dignity, and threatened to turn the whole establishment out of doors before night. The children, hearing the uproar, came to ascertain the cause of it, and when they were told that “Miss Duskyface had run away with a man,” thinking that something very horrible indeed had happened to her, they began crying and screaming as loudly as their juvenile powers would permit them.

Amidst this din, the squire, who looked as if he could have committed infanticide, and thought it justifiable, ordered his horse and rode over towards Cheltenham as hard as he could gallop.

Now the horse on which Mr. MacIeven was mounted was as sure-footed an animal as any in the county of Gloucester. He had never been known to trip or stumble. Whether his master, in his passion or in his haste to overtake and drub the music-master, taxed his steed beyond his powers, or the steed, having heard of the false step committed in the family, was willing to follow so pernicious an example, is uncertain: it is certain, however, that he did commit a *faux pas* before he reached the lodge-gates, and fell on the hard, gravelled road, breaking both his own knees and one of his master's arms. The sum of money that would have been expended on a fruitless pursuit of the fugitives was thus accidentally transferred into the pockets of the family bone-setter, who ordered the squire to bed, and bled him profusely, to prevent the ill-effects of the fever which was raging in his veins, more from disappointed revenge than the consequence of his fall.

We must leave the squire of Broadly Hall to his bed and barley-water, and follow his runaway niece to the abode of the blacksmith

of the north, who ought to be called the *locksmith*, as being an appellation more appropriate and genteel.

Mr. St. Eustace and his "future" met with neither incident nor accident in their rapid journey. They ate, drank, and were as merry as they could be under their peculiar circumstances. As they travelled swiftly, and without stopping to satisfy the cravings of nature, they arrived, sooner than even their sanguine hopes led them to expect they should, at the goal of their wishes. The ceremony was effectually performed; and the bride and bridegroom, after spending a few days in the north, set out on their return to Cheltenham, whither the avocations of the former summoned him in a most peremptory manner.

To tell the truth, the little sum which the professor had obtained, partly from his own savings, and partly by borrowing from his friend and ally, his brother professor, of the palette and painting-brush, was so nearly exhausted ere they were within fifty miles of their home that it caused him some degree of painful speculation, whether or not he should

be enabled to reach it without applying to his wife for a supply. This unpleasant occurrence caused him to do what he had not ventured upon before—make some few general inquiries as to the lady's present means and future prospects.

“Amabelle, dearest one,” said her husband smilingly, as he fumbled, or rather pretended to fumble, in his waistcoat-pocket for a shilling to pay a turnpike with, “have you any small change in your purse?”

“No, dearest,” replied the bride, “I had only my quarter's pocket-money in my desk, and you know you told me to bring nothing with me when I left my tyrant but what few clothes I deemed necessary.”

“True, true. It is of no consequence. I can tell the boys to pay, and get change at the next place we stop at.”

“Yes, you can change a sovereign and four horses at the same time,” said Amabelle, smiling at her own wit.

Mr. St. Eustace tried to smile, as in duty bound, but it was one of those anomalous grins which are wont to disfigure the features

of such as are fully convinced that it is "no laughing matter" that of changing the last sovereign, and not knowing when or how they shall procure a successor. The boys however paid all the 'pikes, and as the horses were "paid on" at the last stage, Mr. St. Eustace managed to pay the boys and repay the 'pikes, and to leave just seven shillings and sixpence in his purse.

What was to be done? He could not—at least he would not—explain to his highly connected and proud wife that he was deficient in means so soon after his marriage, and he felt unwilling to ask the landlord of the inn for a supply. As to forging a check, he never dreamed of it; or, if he did, perhaps, he entertained some serious doubts about getting it cashed. He had a very handsome gold watch and seals, which he might have deposited for the loan of £20, but he could not make up his mind to part with it—even for a week or two. It was a part—a professional part—of himself—being *the* watch that he always placed on the pianoforte while he attended a pupil, to indicate to her and

himself when the hour—the guinea's-worth—was ended. He could not attend a pupil without the watch, which was almost as celebrated as himself. He proposed staying a day or two to see the beauties and manufactures of Worcester, whither he had fortunately directed “the boys,” and to this his wife made no objection.

He ordered an excellent dinner of mine host of the Hop-pole, and, while his lady went to dress, he addressed a letter to his friend the drawing-master. As we are privileged to commit such rudenesses, we shall take the liberty of looking over his very handsome right whisker and splendid cravat, to read what he wrote. The note ran thus :—

“ Hop-pole Hotel,

“ Worcester.

“ My dear Wilkes,

“ You are not only a drawer but a designer. The sketch you gave me of my wife was excellent. I have filled up the outline,

and I assure you she is a perfect picture. Not so bad that—eh? Well; we had a most delightful journey—quick time, though, and without a single bar's rest—as rapid and as noisy as the quick movements in the battle of Prague, played in a schoolroom just before play and promenade time. My Amabelle is all I could wish her, and a far better spec. than you calculated upon. She will have no end of pewter—or, as I ought to say, silver—for her whole fortune is to be paid—not like a farmer's daughter's in *pease*, but in *rupees*. Not so bad that—eh? Well, here we are at Worcester—charming place for crockery and cooking—Severn salmon and Sévres china. I shall buy you a specimen of both as a *mem.* of my wedding trip. By the by, if my desk is open, take out a fifty and send it me down here, as I am short of ready stumpy, and don't choose to ask a strange landlord to change a check for a stranger. If it is locked, just send me £20 or £30, and I will repay you when I return, which will be in a day or two. Get married, old fellow; you will find

a pretty, rich wife, a very desirable accompaniment obligato to a tea-table.

“Yours, very truly,

“EUGENIO ST. EUSTACE.

“PS. Be sure write *by return*.”

The bridegroom, having posted this specimen of the “epistolary humbug” with his own hands, for fear of a mistake, sat down to his dinner, and enjoyed it very much. In the evening he would have proposed a visit to the theatre, which happened to be open at the time, but he had not the means of paying for admission, except to the pit, which he thought *below* such a fine lady as his wife. So he proposed a little stroll, and an early retirement after the fatigues of the journey. To this his wife acceded.

The following day was spent in visiting the china warehouses and manufactories, and Mrs. Eustace was anxious to make many expensive purchases, and would have done so had not her husband assured her that it was a most injudicious plan, as he could buy the very same articles at the auctions in Cheltenham

for one half the price asked for them on the spot where they were made.

"I must, my dearest, take home some pretty little article as a memorial of our visit," said the lady. "There, only that pretty little set of chimney-ornaments."

"How much?" said the husband.

"Only ten guineas," replied the seller.

"And very cheap, too," said the lady. "I *must* have them, dearest."

St. Eustace sighed, and in reply to the seller's question where he should send them, said—

"To the Hop-pole, after breakfast—mind —*after* breakfast—to-morrow morning."

This he said, feeling assured that by that time his friend Wilkes, the drawing-master, would have remitted him the means of paying for them.

A few dozens of gloves were purchased on the same conditions, and St. Eustace retired for the night with just two and sixpence of his cash remaining.

In the morning came the much-desired an-

swer, which we, indulging in the same liberty as before, will give :

“ Cheltenham.

“ Dear Sir,

“ In obedience to your wishes, called at your lodgings. Key not in desk. Fortunately one of mine fitted. Opened, but found no fifties, only some stray MS. music, which showed me you had been ‘running up a score.’ Not so bad, eh? Hope you have not been doing so at Worcester, as have no cash in hand, being middle of quarter. Glad to hear wife likely to prove good spec. Must do as I do for present means — *draw* upon paper. Give a bill, and meet it if you can.

“ Yours, very truly,

“ JOSHUA WILKES.

“ PS. Shall be glad of payment of little advance for running off as soon as convenient.”

Mr. St. Eustace crumpled this note up in his hand, and paid his friend some very im-

proper compliments in very hard words. He did, in truth, make use of terms for which he would have been fined if he had been properly exposed before one of her majesty's justices of the peace. He did it openly too. It was not mental swearing, but a series of naughty words, almost as loudly uttered as if the person on whom they were vented had been present to hear them. One person did hear them, and that person was his astonished wife, who had come into the room unobserved by him.

In his despair, and in reply to her inquiring looks, St. Eustace explained every thing—his moneyless plight, and the ungrateful conduct of the man whom he had called his friend.

Mrs. St. Eustace was disgusted with Wilkes, and pitied her handsome husband. She comforted him, too, by telling him not to mind so low a wretch, as she would write to her uncle, and desire him to remit her a few hundreds immediately.

St. Eustace was delighted ; he cursed Wilkes, ate two mutton-chops and three eggs, and drank a considerable quantity of coffee ;

he was happy, quite happy. The waiter, however, entered with the chimney-ornaments, and a receipted bill for the amount; his happiness was at an end. He looked at the waiter and then at his wife, who understood the look, and bade the waiter to tell "the person" to leave the articles, and call again for the money.

This "the person" declined doing, and Mrs. St. Eustace said he was an impudent fellow, and she should decline taking the goods. "The person" who brought the packets of gloves was treated in the same unceremonious manner. St. Eustace was happy again.

His happiness, however, did not last long, for the waiter, who thought such behaviour very shabby, to say the least of it, reported it to his master, and added, he "thought that the luggage of No. 6 would not pay for the bill already incurred."

The landlord took the hint, and made out the bill. He sent the waiter with it, ordered him to present it, and explain to the gentleman in No. 6 that it was the custom of the

Hop-pole Inn to send in the bill every other day.

The waiter performed his duty very politely, and placed a little document, amounting to £3 16s., before the enraged gentleman in No. 6, who ordered him to tell his master to come up.

Up came "mine host;" and Mrs. St. Eustace having rebuked him severely for his rudeness, told him he must wait until the return of the post, when she expected a remittance from her uncle, Mr. Macleiven, of Broadly Hall, in Gloucestershire.

The host made a most polite bow, and all sorts of apologies, and retired.

A short time afterwards, Mr. St. Eustace passed the bar, and was much surprised to see the landlord give him a very knowing wink. He was inclined to resent it; but, thinking of his present poverty, put on a look-interrogatory instead. The host shortly and whisperingly explained, that "he had heard all about his luck in having run off with the richest heiress in Gloucestershire."

Mr. St. Eustace was satisfied. He bor-

rowed five pounds of the landlord, and helped him to drink a bottle of champagne in the bar. He felt that he, Mr. St. Eustace, was henceforth a celebrated character—a public man.

In the meanwhile, Mrs. St. Eustace wrote a very cool note to her uncle, and without at all apologizing for the step she had taken, desired him to send a few hundred pounds for present purposes by return of post.

The post returned, and Mrs. St. Eustace received a letter from Mrs. Delaval, with an *enclosure*. The letter merely stated, that Mr. Maclieven was very ill in bed, and had no money of Mrs. St. Eustace's in his possession. The *enclosure* was a kind but expostulatory note from Mary, and contained a £10 note, which was all she had; a sum saved out of her pocket-money.

Amabelle was maddened with indignation; her dark eyes flashed like fire; the colour showed itself through her dark skin, and she gave vent to a storm of passion, which astonished, while it frightened, her husband. He trembled, and thought he had married one of the Furies by mistake.

The letters were torn in pieces, and trodden under foot, and the £10 note would have shared their fate had not Mr. St. Eustace interfered, and, by a proper representation of their present circumstances, saved it from destruction.

Not to dwell upon this scene, it will be enough to say, that the landlord and his bill were paid, and, with the very short supply that remained, the bride and bridegroom returned to their home on the *outside* of a stage-coach.

CHAPTER XLIII.

It is not to be supposed that an event like the elopement of a young lady, the daughter of a rich Nabob, from her uncle's halls, with a music-master, would not cause much excitement in any place, much less in such a place as Cheltenham. Of course, the usual lies were told on the occasion. Some said, the young lady had £60,000 in her own right, and that the music-master had carried her off against her will, and under a threat of ruining her character, or murdering her outright, if she did not consent to his arrangements. Others swore that they had it for a fact, that she had not one halfpenny either *in esse* or *posse*, and had fallen in love with Mr. St. Eustace on purpose to gain a livelihood

by coming out as a public singer under his guidance and tuition. Not a few hinted at the necessity that existed for the match, to save the people the trouble of accounting for the lady getting rather stout. The most charitable averred that she was treated very unkindly by her family and Mrs. Delaval, and sought a husband merely to rescue herself from their tyranny.

So much for the constructions put on the conduct of the bride.

The bridegroom was not spared. He was, as I have said, a very handsome man ; he was consequently envied and hated by the "men about Cheltenham." With the women he had been a great favourite. Some of them, indeed, were rather hoping than not that he would be presumptuous enough to aspire to their hands, the fingers of which he had so often directed professionally.

Now that he had aspired and succeeded in one quarter, he was called a presumptuous puppy by his former admirers, and their kindly feelings towards him were wonderfully changed. Even those who applauded him as

“a very plucky fellow” said he was a brute for having knocked down the bride’s uncle, and kicked him when he was down until he had broken his arm! For so was the unfortunate accident that Mr. MacIeven had met with misrepresented.

Wilkes, the drawing-master, heard very many of these remarks; and, seeing that the tide of unpopularity was setting violently in against his former friend, he never acknowledged the share he had taken in the business of the elopement, but shut his lips against the public, and the door of his lodgings against the eloper, even at the risk of losing the sum advanced by him previously to the wedding trip.

At Broadly Hall, it must be confessed, that Amabelle’s absence was duly appreciated by the family and by the domestics; for, by the peculiar talents she possessed for making herself disagreeable, she had succeeded in making every one but Miss Mary her enemy. Every one else hoped that her marriage had signed the warrant of her expulsion from the Hall.

The squire, who had a sound constitution,

soon recovered from the effects of his accident; but while he was still smarting from the pain of the broken limb, he swore that she who had caused it should never enter his doors again. He strictly forbade any one of his family's corresponding with her, and insisted upon her being treated as a stranger by every body at the Hall.

Mrs. Delaval sought to soften his feelings a little, and Mary aided her in trying to persuade him to see Amabelle, and to allow her a small sum quarterly; but he was deaf to all their entreaties, and, when closely pressed upon the subject, swore manfully that if they ever alluded to the black —— in his presence again, he would turn them both out into the world penniless.

Under these very favourable circumstances did Mr. and Mrs. St. Eustace return to their home—a lodging on the first floor of a house in the High Street. Amabelle turned up her Hindoo nose at the “snug apartments,” and the slip-shod maid who *did* for the lodgers. Her husband did not notice the “turn up,” as he was busily engaged in opening a vast

heap of notes of all sizes and shapes, which were placed on his little table, and which he did not doubt, for a moment, contained suitable congratulations on his enviable fortune, sent by his numerous friends.

The very first that he read was this. It bore a printed or rather engraved head-piece, running thus:—

THE MISSES POKER'S
PUMP-ROOM ESTABLISHMENT
FOR
BILIOUS AND INVALID YOUNG LADIES,
THE
MONTPELLIER CHATEAU,

And the contents were in a fine Italian hand—

The Misses Poker beg to decline the future services of Mr. St. Eustace as Professor of Vocal and Instrumental Music to the Pump-room Establishment for Bilious and Invalid Young Ladies, called the Montpellier Chateau.

CARDS OF THE TERMS MAY BE HAD AT THE
MONTPELLIER CHATEAU
AND AT ALL THE LIBRARIES.

The professor of vocal and instrumental music was as much surprised as annoyed at this communication. All the other notes, however, being worded much after the same fashion, turned his indignation into terror, and finally into despair.

There he was, with a lady-wife, and no income whereupon to support her. He struck himself a violent blow upon the forehead, and fell down on his horizontal grand piano, which sent forth a groan, as if in sympathy with its owner's grief.

The sound caught the ear of his wife, while she was examining and turning up her nose at the accommodations provided for her reception in the little back bed-room which opened from the sitting-room. She inquired the meaning of his evident perturbation. He pointed to the letters, and sunk into a chair. She cast her eyes hastily over them, and then abused the Misses Poker and all the rest of the correspondents most heartily, but told her husband not to fret, as she should write to the Hall at once, and, if her uncle was still brute enough to refuse her a supply, she would ap-

ply to her father in India, who would of course allow her a few thousands a year.

Mr. St. Eustace was not so much cheered by this assurance as his wife expected he would be. The former letters from the Hall excluded all hopes from that quarter; and, even if her father could be induced to allow her even a few hundreds instead of thousands, it would be some months before the first remittance could reach them; and what were they to do in the mean while? The gold watch, it is true, would no longer be of use when there were no more pupils to admire it; but they could not live upon one gold watch, a chain, and two seals, for twelve months.

Amabelle wrote to the Hall, as she had said she would. No answer was returned by the bearer; but, in the afternoon of the same day, a cart stopped at the door of the lodging-house, and the driver left two trunks for Mrs. St. Eustace. Upon opening them, she found all her worldly goods, clothes, desk, and work-boxes, a few trinkets of little value, and the quarter's pocket-money, a £5 note.

In vain did she rummage—I believe that is

the ladies'-maid phrase — every article in the boxes for a note. None was to be found, and Amabelle felt that she was discarded by her relations at the Hall. She flew into a passion so violent, that her husband was glad to escape from her, and, without thinking of what he was about, took a stroll up the High Street, and to the Pump-room walks, just as all Cheltenham was enjoying the evening promenade.

He was a magnet that attracted all eyes, but not one beamed kindly on him — no one seemed to know him — all his old intimates frowned upon him — and even his fellow-musicians, who were playing martial music at a circular stand in the rotunda, winked and grinned at each other when he approached, but did not smile on him. To crown all — the Misses Poker, who were following their pupils — once his own — like two vigilant sheep-dogs driving a flock of lambs before them, gave him a lightning glance of displeasure, and then surveyed the heavens as carefully as if they were getting up a lecture on astronomy for the young ladies on their

return to the Montpellier Chateau. The *quondam* pupils of the professor, as per order given, did not even see their *quondam* master.

All this looked bad ; but, though his prospects were gloomy as far as his pupils were concerned, Mr. St. Eustace was not a man to despond. He had talents, and he felt that they were valuable to himself and valued by a “discerning public,” when called into action. A grand concert was to “come off” at the public rooms on the following week, at which he was engaged on very liberal terms—for they could not well do without him, and he had made up his mind not only to fulfil his engagement, but to surpass himself.

It should not be with him *vox et præterea nihil*. He would not only execute his songs, but his solo on the violin also, for on that instrument he played as well as he did upon the piano.

Well, the important day arrived, and the rooms were crowded. The overture went off remarkably well ; two or three glees and duets followed, and met with a favourable reception ; then came the solo on the violin ; but the mo-

ment that the professor, squeezing his handsome person between the bodies of the other performers, placed himself at an isolated desk in front of the orchestra, such a continued storm of hisses and groans, and cries of "Off, off!" arose, that Mr. St. Eustace was obliged to retire, and the company compelled the M. C. to desire him to quit the room.

One voice alone cried "Shame!" and that voice proceeded from Mrs. St. Eustace, who expressed herself in very unguarded terms to the M. C., when the room was perfectly still, and told him that he and all present were guilty of the grossest tyranny in persecuting a man who had committed no offence whatever against society.

The Cheltenham people did not agree in the lady's view of the case, and very rudely insisted on her following her husband, which she did with a look of scorn and defiance, that made many of the gentlemen thank their stars that *they* had not run away with her.

The conductor of this concert, who was a London man, thought that St. Eustace was very harshly treated, when he had heard the

cause of the disturbance explained. He called on him, therefore, on the following morning, and offered him an engagement in the orchestra of the Italian Opera-house.

St. Eustace accepted it thankfully. He explained to his new friend his situation as to present resources, and was readily furnished with sufficient money to discharge his lodgings and the debt due to the "shabby" Wilkes.

A man of real talent, when well placed, must make his way in London. The great and varied talents of St. Eustace were speedily acknowledged and handsomely remunerated. He had removed from the humble lodgings he had taken, on his arrival in town, to a handsome house in Baker Street, and visited his numerous pupils, and attended the theatre and concerts in a handsome carriage. He would, indeed, have been a very happy man, but for his wife's temper.

She was vexed and annoyed because she was not invited into the same society as St. Eustace was. But people, though they saw no degradation in having the talented musician at their parties, did not dream of inviting

his wife, of whom they knew nothing, except that she was some connexion of some country squire who had run off with a good-looking music-master.

On his return home, either from business or pleasure, he was greeted, not with reproaches, but with sulky looks and ironical compliments. He did all to soothe Amabelle, but did all in vain. His attentions to her during her confinement were not appreciated; and, though he would have fondled and caressed the "baby boy," he was never permitted to touch it, and scarcely to look at it. His house soon became distasteful to him, and he gave himself up to a course of life too commonly adopted by men under such circumstances. He sought the tavern, and joined the club of "Bucks," where he spent many hours that would have been spent at home, had that home been made comfortable and cheerful to him.

Mrs. St. Eustace, to make him more wretched, chose to be jealous, and to attribute his nightly absences to a wrong motive. She accused him, in fact, by *innuendos*, of being a faithless husband, and hinted at a determination of

discovering her rival, and poisoning or otherwise removing her.

Mr. St. Eustace had as yet been innocent of the enormity laid to his charge, though exposed to numerous and powerful temptations ; for he was, as I have said, a very handsome man, and set off his elegant person with very elegant clothes. Sorry am I to say that on the hint given him by his silly wife he acted. He exchanged the discomforts of his home, and the revelries and devilries—I merely mean broileries—of a night-tavern, for the lodgings of one of the *corps de ballet*, a lady with whom all the occupants of a certain box on a level with the stage professed to be violently in love.

It is probable, from the nature of her disposition, and the hot blood flowing in her veins, that Mrs. St. Eustace would have executed the threats she had uttered against her rival, had she known the existence of such a connexion. She was saved from the crime of murder by her ignorance of the fact.

The first intimation she received of it was from a morning paper, which informed its readers that

“The talented violin-player and vocalist, Mr. St. Eustace, had been thrown from a gig, in which he was driving a female friend, the celebrated Mademoiselle Pirouette, and was lying in a dangerous state at the Castle at Richmond.”

Amabelle ordered the carriage to Richmond, not to console her husband, and act as his nurse, but to reproach him for his infidelity, and to vent her anger on his friend, whom she fully expected to find sitting by his side, and nursing him.

In this expectation she was disappointed; for when she arrived at Richmond, the handsome St. Eustace was incapable of hearing her reproaches, and “the Pirouette,” who had escaped unhurt, had left for London, to fulfil her engagement at the theatre. That night saw Amabelle a widow.

CHAPTER XLIV.

The reader will be good enough to imagine that six years have elapsed since the death of Mr. St. Eustace. His widow—still a widow—is living with her little boy in a very small lodging near Kennington, on £100 per annum, which her brother allowed her, and remitted from India in half-yearly payments.

Her father was dead. He had died without forgiving her. Her second brother was also dead. He had visited England, and married his cousin Mary. On their return to India, the ship in which they sailed foundered at sea; so at least it was supposed, as she was never seen nor heard of after she left England.

The squire of Broadly Hall was still alive

and well. He was averse to any reconciliation with his niece, and never allowed her name to be mentioned to him, nor his family to correspond with her. Mary, after her marriage with her cousin, and previously to her sailing to India, wished to see and be reconciled to her. Her husband used every means to dissuade her from the attempt, as she had treated him with disdain, and refused to accept his proffered kindnesses when he called to see her upon his arrival. Such, indeed, had been the rudeness of the reception he met with, that he had not called a second time.

Mary, however, was bent on indulging the wishes of her kind heart. She wrote to Amabelle, and told her of her feelings towards her. In reply, she was abused most vilely as one of a family with whom the *injured* Amabelle would never hold any intercourse. The ill-fated pair, therefore, sailed to their ocean-grave, without seeing their widowed sister and cousin.

Upon her boy, who was, indeed, a lovely child, Amabelle doated. She performed for

him all the duties of a nurse, a servant — in short, a devoted mother. She taught him his early lessons, romped with him, played and sang to him, and did all she could to amuse him, and to render his companionless life happy. Yet the child was very miserable. He loved his mother, it is true ; but he feared her, and fear overcame his love. For the most trifling offence unwittingly committed, he was punished with great severity, and an ebullition of his childish mirth would throw his mother into so violent a passion, that she would seize and shake him violently, and spurn him from her, as though he were some loathsome thing.

The poor child would shrink from her in dread, and try to avoid the caresses with which she afterwards endeavoured to console him for, and obliterate her violent conduct. Tears, smiles, and promises of toys and sweetmeats were all alike vain ; the boy could not forget the blows unjustly and cruelly given. As he lay by her side in the long dark nights, even at his early age, he shuddered as he thought of the many years that he must pass

with so fearful a being. He had no one to whom he could complain, no one to whom he could apply for protection or for pity. He was not permitted to speak to any one. Even the poor creature who kept the house wherein they lodged was not allowed to address him. She had, from kindly feelings, interfered upon one occasion, when the shrieks of the child came fearfully distinct to her ear; but the mother bade her quit *her* room upon pain of her quitting the lodgings immediately if she refused to comply.

The poor creature did comply, for she, too, was a widow, and solely dependant for support on the sum derived from letting her lodgings.

A perpetual dread of severe treatment, and an anxious fear of incurring it by the commission of some slight and involuntary offence, added to almost close confinement in a small room—for she seldom went out even for a stroll on the common—seriously affected the boy's health. He grew pale, thin, and wan; his appetite failed him; his eyes lost their lustre; he became silent and thoughtful;

and, instead of playing about, and endeavouring to carol forth the little songs which his mother had taught him, he sat quietly in a corner of the room, gazing upon a book, but not reading it.

The widow did not notice these changes, for they had been gradual ; she merely thought that the child was steady beyond its years, and that his quiet and submissive conduct was the result of her wise and excellent system of education. She congratulated herself on the success of her plans, and fondly hoped that her son would grow up to be all she wished.

In this, however, she was bitterly—but may we say not rightly?—disappointed. The child did not grow up. Like an overforced exotic, he suddenly withered and was gone. An illness of a very few days carried him off. The medical man who was called in at the last hour—for the mother *could* not believe that the child would be taken from her, and fondly trusted that its sickness was not unto death—ascribed its ailments and its premature removal to the true causes—want of air, exercise, and companionship with its equals in age, to which

had been superadded, as he had learnt from the poor lodging-letter, a mode of treatment too severe to be borne by one of such tender years.

This disciple of Æsculapius was a plain-speaking man, and told the widow his opinion of her conduct freely. She drew her small figure up to its full height, and bade him leave her apartments. Not a tear was in her eye, though the flush of pride and indignation was on her cheek, as she issued her orders to the astonished apothecary, who obeyed them, and left her, persuaded that she was a harsh, unfeeling woman, a heartless, cruel mother.

Had he seen her after he had quitted her, and locked herself into the room with the body of her idolized child, he would have altered his opinion of her ; for she threw herself upon the bed beside her boy, and gave vent to a storm of grief that would not be suppressed. True it is that she did not reproach herself, but gave utterance to murmurings against Him who had taken away, too shocking to be recorded. Deep and settled was her despair, for *she had no hopes beyond the grave.*

Misfortunes, many wise saws assure us, are of a sociable nature, and one never goes about this world of woe without a companion with it. The truth of this was shown in the case of Mrs. St. Eustace. On the very day after she had seen the earth heaped upon her loved one, a letter reached her from India, informing her that her eldest brother had lost his all—the savings of many years—by the failure of a great banking concern, where he had invested it in order to secure a return of twelve per cent. Her annuity was to cease, as his income would barely suffice to maintain his wife and family.

Mrs. St. Eustace was nearly penniless when this letter reached her. The funeral of her child, which her pride suggested ought to be performed in a manner suitable to the rank of his family, had exhausted her small resources. What could she do?—state her circumstances to her uncle? to his family? to those who had spurned her with contempt? No; she would perish by her own hand rather than seek their pity and their charity.

She would not, however, do that. Pride,

not a religious feeling, forbade her depriving herself of that which He alone who gave ought to take away. The squire, she thought, would rejoice in her end, and she resolved to live to *spite him*. Horrible, most horrible, is the state of those whose minds, tempest-tossed amidst the billows of affliction, have no religious compass whereby to steer their course !

The poor are proverbially kind to the poor ; and if they have nought to give but advice, they give it, and with kindly motives. Amabelle was forced to explain her situation to the humble creature who lodged her, and whom she had despised and treated scornfully. Instead of retaliating, and bidding her, who had not wherewith to repay her, seek another home, she comforted her, and raised her from her deep despondence, by assuring her that it was in her power to live comfortably, depending upon the exertion of those talents of which she was possessed.

Some " fancy work " was speedily procured for her by her kind hostess, and, by her success in pleasing her employers, she soon earned sufficient, and more than sufficient, to support

her. Her occupation was as agreeable as it was suitable to her. She was engaged in oriental tinting, or poonah work, which was just then in vogue, and in which she excelled. With prosperous circumstances her pride returned. The humble friend was despised, and treated so scornfully, that, in a moment of irritation, she reminded her lodger that but for her she must have been turned out into the world and starved, or done worse. This was enough. She was too indignant to remain with one who had it in her power to remind her of benefits conferred. She left her house, and sought another lodging—much to the delight of the poor woman, who was heartily glad to rid her house of so troublesome and overbearing a person, upon whom every kindness seemed to be thrown away.

Not to weary you (said Mr. Titus Dowell) by recording all that befell Amabelle in a course of some years, it will be enough to say that, when brought into personal communication with her employers, she insulted them, and lost their favours. She afterwards tried various methods of gaining a livelihood, by

taking pupils, keeping a school, going out as a governess in families, and attending neighbouring children as daily governess. Her bad temper, pride, and haughty conduct were such, that she lost all her situations one after another, and was forced, at last, to save herself from starving, at the age of forty, to advertise for a place in the family of some widower, who wanted a discreet, middle-aged woman—or *lady*, as she described herself—to look after himself and household, and educate the “junior branches.”

In an evil hour, a poor country curate, who was blessed with a large family and small means, and who had lost his wife, saw and replied to the advertisement. The reference which he required was what is termed “most satisfactory;” for it was from the lady who kept an establishment wherein Amabelle had taught music, and who did violence to her love of truth in her anxiety to get rid of her troublesome inmate. She thought that telling a *tarradiddle* or two—which is feminine for a falsehood—was justifiable under such peculiar circumstances.

Well, Amabelle came down per coach, and was kindly and hospitably received. The children—two or three little motherless innocents, under five years of age—were introduced to her, and she smudged them and kissed them so very naturally, that their father congratulated himself on being a very lucky man in getting so kind a person, and one who, at the same time, was so very plain and so very dusky-faced as to blunt the shafts of calumny, which are sure to be directed at widowers of the middle age by surrounding ladies. He thought, too, that when his elder daughters came home they would be satisfied that papa would not give them a *belle-mère* in the person of the oriental.

A day or two passed very pleasantly as the curate believed. He was engaged in his study the greater part of the day, and fled thither to his books, or into the village to his flock the moment his meals were over. He therefore knew but little of what occurred in the household. He was not very particular about the domestic arrangements, and was contented to leave all in the hands of one who

professed to be fully capable of managing a family.

On the third day it proved that Mrs. St. Eustace did know how to *manage* a family; but it also proved that she *managed* to disgust them all.

Scarcely was the breakfast over, and he had retreated to his den, than the door was gently opened by his aged cook. She had lived with him for years, and loved and respected him. She made a low curtsy, and, after many attempts to soften the news which she knew would prove unwelcome, told him she had come to give him warning, for that she could not live with Mrs. St. Eustace, who knew no more of cooking than an infant; and after insulting her grossly, was that moment pretending to make a pudding in the dining-parlour, as she could not condescend to set a foot in kitchen with the low menials.

The curate was astonished, but begged her to stay for a few days, to which she agreed.

As soon as she had left the study, the housemaid entered, and gave a brief but positive warning, as "the new madam" had

abused her roundly for not giving her the best bedroom in the house, which was her master's, and not putting a *war-taper* in a night-chamber candlestick.

She was followed by the nursemaid, who declined living with a person who assumed more than her real mistress had done, and who insisted on the delicate little baby's being soused in a tub of cold pump-water in the wash-house every morning, and having the children's faces wiped *upwards* on purpose to give them snub-noses. The woman concluded by attributing much of the widow's violent conduct to a frequent resorting to the cellaret during the afternoon, but more particularly to the spirit-department of its contents at night.

The curate resolved not to judge hastily, but to observe closely, and decide accordingly. He went down into the dining-room, and there, sure enough, was the lady, with all the paraphernalia for the purpose of manufacturing an anomaly, that she called a plum-pudding; and in reply to the astonished looks of the parson, she told him, with one of her

most effective "turn-ups," that "*she* could not eat the cook's viands, she was so very plain in her manners and dress."

The curate rung the bell, and ordered out the paste-board and flour-tin. Mrs. St. Eustace, in a most dignified way, walked out of the room and into the nursery school-room, whence, in a few minutes, the agonised screams of one of the little ones was heard.

The curate, who had been marking the brandy-bottle to ascertain the truth of the nursemaid's insinuation, rushed up to learn the cause, and found his Asiatic invaluable beating one little urchin most cruelly for not saying its letters at once, without having been taught them—which she said was a proof of a stubborn disposition.

The parson said but little then. He merely requested that the children might be released from their lessons for the day, to which Mrs. Eustace said nothing, but treated him with a silent "turn-up." At dinner she did not appear, but at supper she did make up for the loss of the former meal.

After supper the curate took his one glass

of wine and water, and asked her to join him. The lady "never drank any thing but a little small beer."

The curate retired in due time, but, instead of getting into bed, blew out his candle, and sat with his door ajar, thus commanding a view of the landing. Shortly after the servants were gone to bed, he heard a foot on the stairs, and saw the widow come up with a large tumbler, of something reeking, in her hand; he stepped up to her, and found that it was very hot and strong brandy-and-water. She was a little confused, but explained that "she was liable to spasms at times, and the doctors recommended it."

On the following morning, the lady was politely dismissed, with the money for her fares up and down. Instead of returning to town, however, she took a lodging in a neighbouring town, and subjected herself to the terrors of the ecclesiastical court, by defaming the parson's character.

She ran in debt with a good many people in the town, and when her means were exhausted—that is, her credit—she walked

quietly off by moonlight, and was never seen in that part of the country again.

“ You may wonder,” said Titus Dowell, “ how she, a woman of such a character, obtained admittance to the Widows’ Almshouse. The fact is, that Mr. Lauderley found her sick and dying, as it was thought, in a cottage in his parish. He visited her and learnt her history. During her prolonged illness, he discovered the dreadful state of her mind on religious matters; and, after much toil and painful labour, succeeded in convincing and converting her. She afterwards became an inmate of Mrs. Lauderley’s institution, and sincerely regrets that she ever engaged in

A RUNAWAY MATCH.

CHAPTER XLV.

Mr. Titus Dowell concluded his tale, and the rector, thanking him for the entertainment he had afforded him, took up his hat and walked home to his glebe-house.

We had promised Mr. Dowell to "give him a benefit," as he called giving us a dinner, on the following day, and therefore we thought it best not to waste too much of the midnight oil, lest the lamps of our wit should not burn brightly on the morrow. We resisted the

Fly not yet, 'tis just the hour

of our host, Jonathan, though he sung the opening line remarkably well.

Mr. Tit Dowell took up his taper, and replied by chanting—

Now, good night,

to which I put in a very tolerable second. A

very few minutes passed ere we were in the arms of Murphy—an alias for Morpheus, not uncommon in the mouths of Irish gentlewomen who

Cry about taties and granes,

in the purlieus of Covent Garden.

After an excellent breakfast, Tit Dowell took his leave to prepare for our reception. We went to farming, and to call on the parson, whom we found diligently engaged in preparing his sermon for the following Sunday. He knew that I should be at church, and, I suspect, he had made up his mind to astonish me by putting on the high pressure, and producing, from the machinery of his brain, a discourse a little more powerful than ordinary.

Even the very best of us are not free from vanity, and the parson of Mount Whistling was a truly good man. He was simple in his habits, irreproachable in his moral conduct, and approachable by his poor parishioners at all hours, times, and seasons. He never wore gloves, but always walked about with his hands in his trowsers' pockets—a habit which he had acquired, he said, from the many calls

upon his slender means; his hands were always in his pocket.

After we had accompanied him to pay a few visits to the sick and needy, and at his suggestion dropped a few shillings where they were most welcome and most wanted, we strolled on to Mr. Tit's bachelor's abode; for, as there were no ladies to meet us, we did not think it necessary to go in full dress, or in the squire's carriage. A basin of water, a bit of soap and a towel, were all the toilet articles of which we stood in need.

We had a very nice little plain dinner, a dinner that I am much attached to—a leg of mutton boiled, with plenty of tender, young turnips, followed by a leash of partridges, which, by the way, were dressed in a way that I had never before heard of. The birds were stuffed, but not with bread-crumbs and herbs. Each bird had inserted into its interior a rasher of bacon, wrapped round a moderate-sized onion, which communicated a flavour to the flesh that was new to me, and very agreeable. I say nothing of the puddings and sweets, that the housekeeper

thought it *comme il faut* should follow the game, as I rather despise such superfluities, and think them only fit for schoolboys and young ladies, who are afraid that solids should damage the clearness and brilliancy of their complexion.

I recollect a young lady, in the anatomy-school at Oxford, who, on being shown a human skull by the surgeon, and being assured by him that to "that complexion she must come at last," exclaimed with a shudder—

"You don't say so, Mr. ——! Well, I declare *I* would rather die *first*."

Of our drinkables I need only say that there was an abundant supply of good wholesome port and sherry, followed by some pure light St. Julien, to which, as the weather was warm, we exhibited a proof of our adhesiveness.

Of what value is the best wine without a little friendly chat, the jest and repartee to give it a flavour? In my opinion, none whatever. Did the "Great Apostle of Temperance" confine his pledges to the abstaining from *solitarily* absorbing wines and spirituous

liquors, I would become one of his most zealous disciples ; for the only glass that a man ought to take *solus* is, in my opinion, the nightcap tumbler, which he swallows to wash away all the ills of life, and to allow his wife time to undress and prepare the curtain-lecture ; it enables him to be a match for her in eloquence, and makes him too good-humoured to reply harshly to her well-meant but rather prosy remarks on his conduct in general, and his proceedings during the past day in particular.

“Gently, Peter, gently.”

Well, courteous reader — I beg pardon — *J'ai fini*. Somehow or another, I can never help dotting down thoughts as they arise in my mind and—

“*Avez vous fini ?*” asks the courteous reader.

I really beg pardon. Well, over our wine I, of course, sought for information respecting the two of the half-dozen widows, whose histories were as yet a blank to me.

Mr. Titus Dowell had exhausted his store by relating the fortunes of Amabelle St. Eustace, and the squire was more in the

humour for listening than talking ; the rector, therefore, kindly undertook to recount the story of Mrs. Dupesby, with which some passages, in his early life, were somewhat connected.

I must say, however, that he was rather a "slow coach," and interrupted the simple narrative with so many apothegms and deductions from the facts of the case, that I think it best to tell the story in my own way, rather than use his words and style, which bordered on the sermono-prosaic ; a style commendable enough for a parson, but any thing but agreeable, or *telling* for a story-teller ; I don't mean an utterer of forged facts, but a *raconteur*, as the French call a relater of events.

Now then for the rector's tale, told *pro ut statuta requirunt*, as Oxford men say.

In one of the narrow streets that have been annihilated by the widening of the Strand, and the opening of St. Martin's Church to the view of the public, stood a narrow, dark building, which from its external appearance gave no indication of the business carried on within

it. In fact, the appearance was that of a private dwelling upon a very small scale; for the one parlour-window and the door nearly filled up the whole of the frontage. In one of the panes of this window, and on the brass-plate below the brass knocker, was engraved and written

SAMPSON DROSS,
Army Accoutrement Maker.

The external appearance of Sampson Dross was nearly as dingy as the outside of his mansion, and only a little less dingy than the inside of his parlour or shop, as it might be more appropriately named, for therein were exhibited the articles wherein he dealt.

Sampson drove a very fair and very profitable trade in the front of his mansion, but the most important portion of his employment was carried on in the little back parlour.

There he passed the greater portion of his days, and there he made the greater portion of his money. He was, in sooth, one of those kind and accommodating personages, who are ready to supply the pecuniary wants of his

fellow-men, provided they came provided with title-deeds, or other valuable securities. He lent money—he lent it liberally too, *if* he could clear £50 per cent by the loan without any risk.

So cautious had Sampson been throughout his long life that, except in one or two instances when he had been overreached by the sons of Moses, he had not made one mistake. He had more title-deeds and bonds in his possession than any lawyer in good conveyancing practice, and he had larger and more indestructible-by-any-ordinary-fire iron safes, than any London churchwarden, or even than any banker east of Temple-bar. He was wealthy beyond the imagination of any ordinary mortal, for he had made large profits during a long life, and had no personal or household expences to drain those profits.

What could a man spend who had a wife who did all the household work, and had but one child, (a pair of old birds with one chick,) who lived upon a twopenny roll and two mutton-chops, or one sheep's head manufactured into thin broth *de die in diem* ? Even the

halfpenny-worth of milk that used to be taken in morningly for the two *teas*—the matutinal and the vespertinal—was put down as too expensive a luxury when the little Isabella was sent to a twopenny school in St. Martin's Lane.

The only luxury that Sampson Dross indulged in was a Sunday dinner at the shilling ordinary at the Mother Redcap's at the foot of Highgate Hill. It was an inexcusable expense, some persons might say, but then he indulged in it as a set-off for a doctor's bill which he might have incurred had he not taken a little exercise on one of the seven days of the week.

Even in exercise, Dross was economical. He walked the three miles to his favourite tavern as slowly as he could, for fear the perspiration attendant on rapid motion should render his linen useless for seven days' wear, and made a long *détour* round shady lanes, and grass grounds, lest the sun should "take the shine out of" his beaver-hat, and the gravel of the hard roads grind the soles of his shoes out before their legitimate time.

He was not a very welcome guest to the proprietor of the Mother Redcap, as he had great powers of consumption, and had at least eighteen-pennyworth for his shilling. He did not compensate for over-eating by even moderate drinking, for he took but one pint of London particular porter—it was his *entire* drink—and one halfpenny pipe; and he never brought a bad appetited friend with him for “the good of the house,” so that in reality the landlord was a loser by him.

He was greeted with black looks both by the landlord and the waiters whenever he made his appearance, and seated himself opposite the most substantial joint—but what cared Sampson for that? He paid his fifteenpence for dinner and drink, and gave the waiter a penny with a great deal of emphasis. He placed it—the vulgar *brown*—in the cringing creature’s hand with as much form and ceremony as if it had been a golden guinea.

The company despised him, for they knew not who he was. What cared Sampson for that?—he came to eat, not to excite reverence or form friendships.

He despised a man who was extravagant enough to drink part of a bowl of punch, or order a ninepennyworth of brandy-and-water, and so he told every such rash individual by his looks.

Both the landlord and his regular customers talked over the conduct of Sampson Dross very freely, and resolved to treat him in such a manner as should drive him to some other house. They made up their minds to offend him, if necessary, but before doing so they resolved to pack the table, so that when he entered the room the landlord might be able to tell him truly that there was no room for *him*.

This was effected by each of the regular diners bringing with him a friend from London. The table was filled, nay, crammed to suffocation, when Sampson entered.

The landlord put on a most polite and hypocritical face, and expressed his regret that it was impossible to accommodate so regular a customer. A grin went round—and then a titter expanding gradually into a loud laugh.

Sampson scowled, put his very large um-

brella, which he had been using as an overgrown parasol, under his arm, slapped his hat forcibly on his head, and was about to quit the ordinary, when his eye fell upon one of the party, who was evidently endeavouring to shelter his diminutive person behind the stoutest man in the room.

“Simon Hughes—Simon Hughes!” cried Sampson Dross; “I must look out for another clerk. You must be shortly guilty of embezzlement, if you can spend a shilling and threepence at an ordinary out of six shillings a week.”

Simon trembled, but said nothing.

Sampson Dross looked as black as midnight at him, and turned to leave the room; before, however, he reached the door, the whole company, at least, all the regular diners, asked in suppressed tones—“Who is he?”

“My employer (clerks never say *master*)—old Dross, the rich money-lender,” replied Simon Hughes. “I shall get the sack to-morrow, depend upon it.”

The landlord caught the name, and as every body knew Sampson Dross by reputation, he

rushed after the wealthy individual, and assured him that if he had known who he was he would have cleared the room of every one else rather than a place should not have been found for him.

Sampson Dross was indignant for a time; but relented, and took the president's chair, which was given up to him without any hesitation.

Dross was flattered by the attentions paid to his wealth through himself, and was guilty of spending an extra fourpence in a glass of gin-and-water, which, being very hot, and composed of a liquid in which he had never indulged, made him cough and brought the rheum into his eyes; he, therefore, benevolently gave the mixture to his clerk, who was almost too nervously agitated to drink it—but he did.

After this memorable Sunday, Dross was established as the regular president of the ordinary. A most lucky hit it proved for the landlord, as, although the president was a dead loss to him by his consumptive and unimbibable qualities, he was a source of gain

to him by attracting many additional guests, who came to dine with the wealthy Sampson Dross, as if they thought he would make all of them his residuary legatees.

Sampson was gratified by the attentions paid to him, but he did not show his gratitude by ordering in the president's bowl, except on one occasion, when—it being his birthday—he “stood” a five shillings’-worth of punch, having agreed with the landlord privately to pay him four shillings and sixpence for it.

In the very middle of the bowl, just as the money-lender's heart was expanding, either at its owner's unwonted generosity, or the unwonted liquor, Simon Hughes, looking paler than a pale man might be thought capable of looking, bustled up to him, and frankly told him, “Missus was dead — seized with an upper-plexy.”

The punch-ladle fell from Sampson's hand, and he seized his clerk by the collar of his coat, whispering to him—

“Did you send for a doctor?”

"No—no, sir," said Simon, "she was past that."

"Then I can afford another bowl," said Sampson. "Sit down, Simon—sit down, and partake. It is paid for, and must be drink."

When the bowl was finished, Sampson Dross walked calmly back to London, followed by his clerk. He was rather sorry that he had lost his wife, but very glad that he had escaped a doctor's bill. As to the funeral expenses, he resolved they should not amount to much, and the little to which he intended they should amount he put down in his mind as a set-off against her eating, drinking, and clothing, if she had lived.

It was not until the corpse was interred, in a style bordering closely on the economic parochial, that Sampson found out that his loss was a more serious one than he had calculated upon. He discovered that it was necessary to hire a person to supply his wife's place. He tried two or three charwomen,

but they robbed him, and wanted gin and porter two or three times a-day. He hired an old woman, who had been housekeeper in a tradesman's family, but "she never dined off any thing but a hot joint daily, and did not admire mutton-chops. She liked her tea, too, remarkably strong and green."

Poor Sampson was sadly put to it. He did not know what to do. He was afraid to marry again lest he should be deceived in the character of the lady, who might possibly spend more money in one year than she brought him for her dowry. He dropped all thoughts of a Mrs. Dross, No. 2, and resolved to consult his family (who lived far north, and with whom he had had but little communication since he had left his home as a mere child,) and find out some female connected with him by relationship, to whom a home would be considered as a compensation for her services. He put his resolution into force, and was delighted to hear that his eldest sister, widowed and dependant on her parents for a scanty support, would be glad to avail

herself of the offer. As a new era opened in the life of the miser when his sister came to reside with him, I must describe the consequent changes that took place in a new chapter.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Mrs. Lascelles, the sister of Sampson Dross, was the widow of a country surgeon, a man of good family, and considerable practice. He might have realized a large income, but he had a failing—he loved the turf and a game at piquet. The consequence was, that what he won by physicing he lost by gambling; and being unable to meet his liabilities upon the great St. Leger, went home, and took *quant. suff.* of Prussic acid. His creditors seized every thing, even the gilt Galen's head over the door; leaving the widow penniless, and, fortunately, childless. She found, as we have seen, a home in her own family.

Now, Mrs. Lascelles had been used to live in a style somewhat above the ordinary style

of country doctors. She had, in fact, been in the habit of visiting and being visited by country people; which does not mean the people who merely lived in the country—but by the dons—the select. Though humbly born, she had been well educated, and was naturally shrewd and clever. She, therefore, easily acquired the manners and successfully imitated the tone of those into whose society her husband had introduced her. Even the paternal cottage, on her return to it, bore an air of gentility about it by her judicious and yet economic alterations and arrangements. The little best parlour became a drawing-room, and fitted for the reception of most of her former visitors, who did not forget nor look down upon her in her adversity.

When Mrs. Lascelles arrived in town, and was conveyed, with her luggage, in a hackney-coach, to the gloomy residence of her brother, she was quite amazed to see so mean and so filthy a dwelling. She did not express her surprise, but resolved to alter its appearance as speedily as possible. The clothes and style of her niece astonished her almost as much

as the foulness of her abode; for the girl, now growing up into a woman, was clad but little better than her neighbour's daughter, at the chandler's shop, and her manners were of the first description, resembling those of an uneducated chambermaid.

Mrs. Lascelles knew that her brother was what is termed "a man well to do in the world," but she did not know that he was notoriously one of the wealthiest men in town, until the drudge, whom she employed to rid the house of some of its filth, revealed the secret to her.

Sampson Dross was vain of his riches, but he confined his vanity to his own bosom. He never talked of his wealth, and had never communicated to his family the extraordinary success he had met with in life. They had no idea that the boy, who had left them with a few shillings in his pocket, and began life in town as a sweeper of the shop and a carrier-out of parcels, was now worth thousands, and regulated the money-market. They knew that he had succeeded to his master's business, and married his master's natural daughter.

ter, and that he was carrying on the business successfully, and living very frugally. That was all they knew, and that was satisfactory enough. They were in entire ignorance of the much more valuable and profitable concern that was managed in the little back-parlour; and had they known of it, they would probably have blamed him for risking his gains by lending them out even at usurious interest.

As soon as his sister had ascertained that the information she had received might be credited, she determined to effect an entire revolution in the miser's affairs and mode of living. It required a considerable degree of tact to introduce the subject and to carry out her designs; but when a clever woman, and one who knows some little of the world, sets seriously about managing a man, she is sure to succeed at last.

Mrs. Lascelles first succeeded in making her brother own to her the extent of his riches. She, in the next place, by pointing out to him the neglected state of his daughter's education, prevailed on him to send her to a first-rate

school. Lastly, by assailing his vanity through his pocket, and showing him how profitable a thing associating with the great and fashionable might be made, induced him to take a large mansion in St. James's Square, to furnish it fashionably, and to hire a suitable establishment.

The old house of business was retained, and Simon Hughes allowed to occupy it with an advanced salary, which he richly deserved, as he had spent all his life in Mr. Dross's service, and had served him faithfully.

The miser sighed as he sat in his well-furnished dining-room and saw two servants standing, one behind his own chair, and another behind his sister's.

He sighed more deeply as he sank down in his down bed, and gazed on its rich chintz furniture; but he positively groaned when he saw the preparations that had been made to entertain a few of his city friends, merchants of acknowledged respectability. He shuddered as he saw his butler tender champagne to his guests — champagne that had cost him eight shillings a bottle—him who had grudged

the sixpence demanded for a glass of gin-and-water at the Mother Redcap. It almost choked him as he drank it. When, after dinner, the table was supplied with clarets of the finest flavour, and his guests emptied bottle after bottle—for wine was drunk in those days and by that class of persons—he thought he was completely ruined; but, as soon as he retired with his friends to the drawing-room, and one after another of them sought to gain his private ear, and asked for a loan, offering him more favourable terms than he had ever succeeded in getting during business-hours at his obscure shop, he began to think that the outlay on dinners and wines was judicious, and acknowledged that his sister was right in the plan of proceeding which she had laid down for him. He was as avaricious and miserly as ever; but he felt less reluctance at spending one hundred pounds on an entertainment at his mansion than he had done in paying for his dinner at the one shilling ordinary at the foot of Highgate Hill, because he knew that the profits were all in favour of the enlarged expenditure.

With his notions of the mode of carrying on business, the personal appearance of Sampson Dross was altered. He was no longer the shabby, Guy-Faux-looking individual that he had been. His suit of rusty, ill-fitting black, terminating in gaiters and thick-soled shoes, was exchanged for a very well-made suit of sober-coloured clothes in the morning, and in the evening he appeared in a full-dress of the very best material and make that he could command. His hair, which had been used to fly about his head, half-combed and ragged from being only cut twice a-year, was arranged by a first-rate dresser, and slightly covered with powder. He was, in fact, *alter et idem*. He was the same pinching, grasping, avaricious old money-lender. His heart was as hard and as black as ever; but he was another in outward appearance, another in his habits and demeanour. His hands, which had been used to be covered with dirt, were now covered with white kid gloves, one of which he generally removed, to show a valuable brilliant ring, as he pretended to take a pinch of snuff from an elegant gold snuff-box.

It required but a few months to place Sampson Dross in a position in society which he never dreamed of attaining. What will not gold effect? The proud and mighty of the land thought it not only not a disgrace, but an honour, to be on the dining-list of a low-born, half-educated money-lender. The dinners and evening parties in St. James's Square were duly and daily chronicled in the fashionable journals of the day. Sampson Dross could not take a drive into the park with his sister without seeing the fact recorded on the following morning.

Did he object to this? No. His vanity was tickled, and his business was increased by it. The paragraphs recording his dinners and drives were nothing but so many unpaid advertisements of "money to be lent on good security," and his name was up on 'change. No great design was undertaken, no company formed, without a prospectus of it being furnished to the public with the name of Sampson Dross at the top of it in large capitals. No government loan was contracted for without the great capitalists consulting the rich

man in St. James's Square; and no fall or rise took place in the market without his having as much or more to do with it than the political events to which it was generally attributed. No heir to a family fortune thought of raising money upon a *post-obit* without first applying to the fashionable accommodater of the day.

As long as the season lasted, Sampson Dross lived in a whirl of pleasure, for he was flattered and fawned upon by all the needy great ones, and made money almost faster than he could tell it. When London was empty, and his customers sought *their* country-seats, as they called them, though many of them were mortgaged nearly to their full value to the money-lender, Sampson began to feel himself dull. He missed his dinner-parties, and the fun and wit that used to be heard around his table. He could not sit quietly down with the quiet Mrs. Lascelles to a quiet dinner. He had been used to excitement, and he required excitement. He tried the plan of inviting the few of his city friends whose occupations detained them in and about

town. It would not do — the attempt was a dead failure. They came, and ate and drank ; they talked, too ; but it was not the talk which he had lately been in the habit of hearing ; it was all about business, and anticipated failures from dabbling in sugars and coffees, and speculating in rises or falls. All this would have been very interesting to him a few short months before, but now it was all flat, stale, and unprofitable. He was astonished at the change in himself, and could not account for his wishing to hear the lively talk of scandal, the playful, personal attack, the ready repartee, and the sparkling pun or jest, in preference to the more useful and solid conversation in which he used to delight and profit by.

Sampson sat and wondered, over his rapid-drinking Lafitte, how his great acquaintances — I was nearly calling them friends — amused themselves in the country. He was soon able to ascertain, for one of his best customers, Lord Dumbledore, who wanted a little “ ready ” to carry on the war, invited him and his sister to spend a week with him at Dumbledore

House, a delightful residence in Sussex. Thither Sampson repaired, and went shooting, though he could not fire for blinking; fishing, though he ran the hooks into his fingers instead of the worm; played at billiards, though he had been unused to *that* sort of pocketing; and rode to races, and danced at assize and country balls, though he knew neither the names, weights, and colours of the riders of the horses, nor the names, weights, and families of his partner in the dance.

He was delighted with all this, however, and determined to have a country-house of his own. On his return to town he looked over his deeds and writings until he discovered the title-deeds of an estate that he thought would suit him. He went down to see it, and, knowing that the supposed owner of it was very needy—indeed “hard up,” as he termed it, he foreclosed immediately, and by the help of a “little advance,” was put into immediate possession of a fine estate, not very far from the hospitable mansion of his friend Lord Dumbledore. He took the furniture at a valuation, and retained most of the

servants. He even purchased the hounds, though he could not ride over a broomstick, because Mrs. Lascelles advised him to do so as an additional string to the bow with which he meant to bring down his quarries.

The reader will be so good as to imagine Mr. Sampson Dross so successful in all his speculations, that in the course of a few years he was dubbed a Baronet, and took his seat in the House of Commons, as member for the borough which adjoined his estate. This borough was in the hands of the principal attorney, who handed it over to Sir Sampson for a pretty considerable consideration — not a mere “say two thousand.” Sir Sampson voted with the government, and thereby ensured early information of events, which enabled him to go “bull or bear” on the exchange, to the detriment and injury of those who had not the means of acquiring such early information as he had.

CHAPTER XLVII.

But to the more important person in this little sketch.

Miss Isabella Dross was thoroughly finished off at the finishing school. She returned home at the age of nineteen, full of accomplishments and high hopes. Her mistress and her schoolfellows had not failed to impress her with proper notions of her enviable position in society. She was rather good-looking than otherwise; of a pretty but *petite* figure. She dressed well, danced well, and she played and sang very prettily, and could throw a dash of French and Italian into her talk, which enlivened it exceedingly. But, had all these accomplishments been wanting; had she been as ugly as — any ugly lady of the

reader's acquaintance ; had she been short and puffy, or tall and scraggy ; nay, had she been born with a pig's countenance, what would it have mattered to the only child of Sir Sampson Dross—the heiress of millions ?

Mrs. Lascelles was greatly pleased with the manners and appearance of her niece, and the way in which she bore her blushing honours when first introduced into society. She pronounced her perfect when she observed the very lady-like manner in which she ascended and descended the steps of the carriage. She would not, perhaps, have been surprised at her doing it so very genteelly, had she known that an old chariot was kept in the retired gardens of the finishing school, for the purpose of teaching the young ladies so necessary a branch of female education. They practised mounting and dismounting for a quarter of an hour every morning before breakfast.

Sir Sampson was proud of his girl. He paid his last check of £200 for her board and education for the last half-year with the greatest pleasure, and was about to add £50 as a *douceur* — a proof of his entire satisfac-

tion in the plans pursued ; but he did not — for he knew he should get nothing by it—the world would never hear of his munificence.

Soon after Isabella's introduction to the world, the mansion in St. James's Square was crowded from morning until night. Before his daughter came out, Sir Sampson was visited only by gentlemen, except upon state occasions, when he gave a ball or a private concert. Now it was besieged by ladies — especially by mothers who had sons fit for matrimony. Even young ladies were anxious to be upon intimate terms with the great match of the day, for they anticipated very gay doings, and hoped to catch some one of the suitors that would be found flitting around the heiress. They knew that though she would have many adorers, she could only have one husband, and that a rejected addresser is very likely to "pop the question" to some other lady who may be thrown in his way, just to show the lady who has rejected him, that he is not an object of aversion to the whole sex.

Among the most attentive of the friends of Sir Sampson were the Dumbledores, *père*,

mère, filles et fils. His lordship had a heavy account against him in Sir Sampson's books, and he had a son, the Honourable Mr. Timpkinson Bumblebee, whom he wished to use as a sponge in wiping out the figures, by making him the husband of Isabella, and the inheritor of the ill-gotten gains of her papa.

In this object he was nobly seconded by his noble son and his noble family, who looked upon it as the only means of retrieving their squandered fortunes, and saving the small remnant that they could still call their own. Both Mrs. Lascelles and Papa Dross clearly saw through their manœuvring, but they saw it with very different feelings.

The aunt would have wished to see her niece marry any one of respectability, even a commoner, who was deserving of her, and who sought her not for her money only ; the newly-created Baronet wished to see his daughter a lady of title, and thought that young Bumblebee would serve to make her such, as well as any one else. Moreover, Sir Sampson really liked Lord Dumbledore, and felt grateful to him for having put him in the right road to

get his baronetcy; and he thought it more than probable that the immense wealth which the future lord would be possessed of on his father's decease would enable him to convert his lady into a duchess.

What were Isabella's feelings on the subject? She liked Lady Dumbledore much, for she was a goodnatured, loveable person. She liked the girls tolerably, but she really hated Mr. Bumblebee, and showed her detestation of him as openly as she had the courage to do. She liked the father very little better than she did the son; though he showed her every attention in his power, which was a trouble that the suitor did not think fit, or worth his while, to take.

My lady readers will probably wish to learn what sort of a being Mr. Timpkinson Bumblebee was, and their wish shall be gratified. Let them listen to the following dialogue:—

“Dupesby, my fine fellow!” said Mr. Timpkinson to his friend, a tall, handsome man, with very black hair and eyes, and exceedingly correct in dress—“Dupesby, this is a d—d bore, isn't it?”

"What is a bore, Timpky?" inquired his friend, who used the *short* for Timpkinson adopted by all his intimates.

"Don't you know, then, that my governor has ordered me to do the amiable with Sir Sampson's daughter?"

"I have heard that he expects you to marry her."

"Oh, that's nothing," said the honourable; "I am ready and willing; but that is not all he expects."

"Indeed!" replied his friend; "does he expect you to give up Signora Schnappes and your book upon the Derby?"

"No, not exactly that. . . ."

"The billiard-table, perhaps, at which you beat us all?"

"No, no, not that."

"Well, then, I cannot possibly imagine the object or end of his expectations, for those are the only things you are capable of doing," said Dupesby, looking his friend calmly in the face.

"No—not the only things, Dupesby. I

can fence tolerably well, and can set-to a little—at least Jackson says so.”

“ A little, certainly; but what are you expected to do?”

“ To be abominably attentive to my lady that is to be—to dance, to talk to her, and—and, in short, to be very attentive—to behave as a perfect gentleman before marriage—ain’t it a bore?”

“ I should think not,” replied Dupesby. “ If I were any body, I would do my best to cut you out; but you know I am nobody—a mere straw cast by chance in the stream of society, to be carried wherever the whirlings of the current choose to toss me.”

“ Though you have no legal governor, Dupesby, you are a devilish clever fellow, and make an infinity of tin in some way or another.”

“ I do my best to earn enough to live upon, and owe no man a shilling.”

“ I wish *I* could say so—I owe a devilish deal,” said Timkinson, sighing as he poured out a large glass of champagne, and tossed it off. “ If it was not for my debts and my

governor's extravagance, I would see Sir Sampson's daughter at York before I would tie myself up yet."

"Well, I wish I had your chance, that is all. I think Miss Isabella Dross a very nice person, and with one-eighth of her fortune I would soon be as rich as the Baronet."

"I don't doubt it. You are a devilish clever fellow, and would soon turn hundreds into thousands. Now I never could think and scheme as you do—at school I got...."

"Flogged for cribbing another boy's verses."

"And at college I got...."

"Expelled for bribing the college barber to get you a prize essay written by a poor bible-clerk, and passing it off as your own."

"Yes, exactly; and in the Guards I nearly got...."

"Cashiered for being too lazy to appear upon parade now and then."

"How *could* I help it?" inquired Timpy; "you know I was at Epsom one day, at Jackson's rooms on the second, and was engaged to finish the rubber-match with the

billiard-marker at the tables in Jermyn Street on the third."

"All of which might have been done easily enough with a little management," said Mr. Dupesby. "But now, as to your wealthy bride—you must not give way to your indolence in that quarter, or you will lose her. Recollect she is surrounded by suitors, and who will not fail to draw her attention to your neglect of her."

"It is a d——d bore. I do not want to lose her, for we want her tin, and yet I cannot play the constant lover."

"Cannot you do it by deputy?" inquired Dupesby.

"By Jove, a capital notion: but whom shall I get to do deputy, eh?"

"I will be your deputy for a few thousands," said Dupesby, looking fixedly and earnestly on his friend.

"Will you, by Jove! then you shall. I'll stump handsome when we're spliced—but, eh? I don't know; you are a deuced handsome fellow, and might put in a word for yourself."

“Honour—you know—Timpky—honour! Besides, you, though not quite upon so large or so dark a scale, are much admired by the women. Those curling auburn locks, and those flashing blue eyes, have done execution before now.”

“Egad, that’s true enough—but somehow, you dark fellows, with great coarse whiskers, get the better of us.”

“What, jealous, Timpky?”

“Jealous! oh no! Come, that’s rather too good; and to prove it, I will introduce you to-night, and you shall do the agreeable *for me* to the great heiress.”

Mr. Dupesby agreed, playfully warning his friend Timpky, that if the lady showed a decided preference for the deputy, he would run off with her.

As Mr. Bumblebee did not think it likely that any lady *with tin*, as he called money, would marry a mere adventurer—the natural son of some great unknown, in preference to a good-looking young man of good family and some reputation, as a lady and time-killer, he smiled very goodhumouredly, and

offered to bet "five to one such an event never came off."

Mr. Dupesby booked the bet "in ponies," but Timpky only smiled the more goodnaturedly.

The introduction was effected on the same evening, after a pleasant little dinner at Signora Schnappe's lodgings—and within three weeks of that memorable evening, Miss Isabella Dross was privately married to the handsome and scheming Mr. Dupesby. A note to his friend Timpky ran thus :

"Dear Timpky,

"I will trouble you for five ponies—Isabella is mine.

"Yours truly,

"STAFFORD DUPESBY."

Mr. Timpkinson Bumblebee was in the *Post* of the following morning amongst the list of the departed—not from this life—but from London for Paris.

I must beg my reader to fancy himself in

St. James's Square, about eleven o'clock of the day of the marriage.

"Mrs. Lascelles, madam," said Sir Sampson, laying down the newspaper in which he had been reading the city article and the gazette only, "I am going into the city. I have a presentiment that something will happen to day which will very much astonish me."

"Why do you think so?" inquired his sister.

"I dreamed last night a very uncomfortable dream. I thought a favourite speculation of mine had turned out a dead failure, and that somehow or another Isabella was the cause of it. It was the utter ruin of the Grand Junction Banking Company."

"Pooh—nonsense, Sir Sampson; put no faith in dreams. What should your daughter have to do with junction companies?"

"I cannot tell; but I dreamed the same dream three times. But where is my girl? I have not seen her this morning."

"Nor I," said Mrs. Lascelles; "she breakfasted in her own room, I suppose, for we were very late last night."

"It was a most delightful party, and I do not wonder at people staying late. That Mr. Dupesby, who, by the by, is a very clever fellow, seemed very attentive to Isabella, while that foolish fellow, her future husband, Bumblebee, paid her no sort of attention whatever."

"It is a great pity," said Mrs. Lascelles, "that Mr. Dupesby is not the heir to the peerage instead of his friend. He is a most charming person, and I am sure Isabella likes him better than the inanimate, selfish puppy whom you have selected for her."

"She may like him as much as she pleases, provided she marries the other. I have set my heart upon the match, and come what will, nothing shall prevent it being made."

"Many a slip between the cup and lip," said Mrs. Lascelles, smiling.

"Not in this case, madam—not in this case. Nothing can, nothing *shall* occur to frustrate my plans," said the Baronet, laying his hand violently on the loo-table.

Scarcely had he made this rash assertion, when the door was gently opened, and Mr.

- Dupesby, with Isabella leaning on his arm, entered the room. The gentleman looked proudly and victoriously at the papa and aunt, while the lady held down her head and gazed steadfastly on the carpet.

Mrs. Lascelles, from that instinct belonging of natural right to the fair sex, felt assured that the couple before her were man and wife.

The Baronet felt that something was wrong, but he could not tell what. His blood retired from the extremities of his person to his heart; his face was pale; his hands shook, and his voice trembled as he said,

“Eh?—what—what *is* the matter?”

“Allow me to introduce you to Mrs. Dupesby, my dear sir,” said the gentleman.

“Dear father, dear aunt—forgive me—I am married.”

“Eh?—what?” said the father.

“How?—married?” screamed the aunt.

“Married this morning, by licence, in St. James’s Church, and here is the certificate,” said the bridegroom.

“I would have asked your consent,” said

the "mourning bride," weeping, "but I knew it would be useless; you were so bent upon my marrying that disagreeable Bumblebee."

"D——n!" shouted the Baronet. "Swindled, by all that's rascally!"

"Most imprudent, to say the least of it," said his sister.

Isabella threw herself upon her knees before her father, but he spurned her from him, and was about to curse her, when Mr. Dupesby stepped up to him, and whispered something in his ear.

What it was that was whispered was never known precisely; the only word that was heard distinctly was "junction." The consequence was, that the Baronet left the room with the bridegroom, and returned in about half an hour, and placed his daughter in her husband's arms, bidding God bless her. Lord Dumbledore wintered in Naples.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Five years passed over the heads of the bride and bridegroom in comparative happiness. They lived principally at the estate in Sussex, whence the latter went now and then to assist his father in carrying out some bold plans of his own suggesting.

These schemes had prospered beyond their warmest expectations; but Dupesby had talents for planning—Sir Sampson, caution and habits of business for carrying those plans out. Death, however, which knocks at the door of the rich as well as the poor man, gave a double rat-tat at the mansion in St. James's Square. The Baronet could not say "not at home." He was buried by the Banting of his day in great splendour, at the private

chapel of the estate which he had purchased for his country residence.

Mrs. Lascelles still resided with her niece, for Mr. Dupesby liked her much, and thought her a safe and valuable companion for his wife, from whom he was now frequently absent, engaged in winding up the affairs of his father-in-law, and in forming plans to add to what was already too much for him to manage comfortably.

In an evil hour he expressed his intention openly on the Stock Exchange to ruin a great capitalist, who had thwarted him in one of his schemes, by taking a government contract, of which he had made sure.

“ I will ruin him, by —— !” cried he.

“ Ah ! ah !” laughed the successful Israelite, “ there is two as can play at dat game.”

As the subject was openly talked of, it excited a great deal of interest, and bets were laid to a large amount, the odds being greatly in favour of Dupesby.

The Jews, however, combined together against Dupesby, who was too proud of his own abilities to ask or take advice. The re-

sult was, that he was ruined past all redemption. He relied upon information, which he believed to be accurate, but which had been furnished at great expense, and through untraceable channels, by the enemy — risked more than his all to crush his foe, and lost it. Madness followed—madness, curable only by death, which speedily relieved him of his sufferings.

And what became of Isabella and her aunt? It was fortunate for her that she had a woman of strong mind with her during the short but severe illness of her husband, or she would have sunk under the blow. When his body was placed in the tomb beside her father's, Isabella turned to her aunt, who had had a long interview with the lawyers, and inquired what was to be done.

“ We must go forth into the world, my child, and seek a living as we best may, for we have nothing left to depend upon. We are worse than beggars; for the assets, large as they are, will not cover the debts. We must leave this house immediately, and where to go I know not, save to my brother's home,

and he is scarcely able to maintain his own wife and children. Fortunate it is, however, that you are childless, though you have often murmured against Providence for not having blessed you with an heir to all your wealth."

"Fortunate, indeed!" said Isabella, "but I will never murmur more. For myself, I can submit to any thing; but to see my children starving round me, I could not endure it. Would that I had but one friend left to aid me!"

Scarcely had Isabella uttered this wish, when a servant told her that a gentleman wished to see her. She bid him enter. It was Simon Hughes, Sir Sampson Dross's first clerk. He came to offer a home for a short time to the child of his former patron. He had bought the army-accountment business from his master, and had been so far successful as to have been able to support and educate a large family on the profits of it.

Isabella, with her aunt, removed to her former home; and afterwards, being assisted by Simon with a small loan, they set up a school in the country. They succeeded be-

yond their hopes, but their success was not lasting.

The scarlet fever, in its worst form, broke out in the school. Mrs. Lascelles was the first victim to its violence. Several of the children died. All sickened, and the spot was, as it were, *tabooed* ever afterwards. After much struggling in different scenes, wearied with grief and adversity, the heiress found rest in the Widows' Almshouse.

CHAPTER XLIX.

The rector completed his tale, and Mr. Titus Dowell proposed a quiet rubber. We were not in the humour for indulging him, though we were all fond of whist; for a resplendent October moon cast its beams into the open window of the room in which we were sitting, and seemed to impose upon us the notion that it would be a sacrilege against Diana if we were to shut out her rays, and substitute a pair of waxes for her clear beams.

The night was warm and delicious; the air was loaded with the fragrance of the sweetly-smelling clematis, which grew luxuriantly over the trellised verandas; a unanimous vote was passed that, instead of the card-table and counter-box, the cigar-case and liqueur-stand

should be introduced, and the evening passed in a cozy smoke and a pleasant chat. The fragrant weed soon mingled its odour with the fragrant flowers, and a prolonged silence proved how greatly their combined perfumes were relished.

“What, Peter!” cries some fair lady, who shudders at the notion of tobacco — “What! call the smell of that nasty weed a perfume?”

“Yes, madam, and a most delicious perfume too, if it is wafted from a real Havannah. I have always reckoned Sir Walter Raleigh among the greatest benefactors to mankind.”

“What, the wretch that introduced smoking, Peter? he ought to have been drowned for doing it.”

“He was very nearly, madam, by his servant, who did not know the luxury of smoking, and threw cold water upon the experiment.”

“Well, *I* will never marry a man that smokes.”

“Then mind, madam, that you ascertain correctly beforehand that he is never guilty of doing so; for, if he should be fond of it,

and try to do it on the sly, rely upon it you will spoil his temper if you attempt to put his pipe out."

"Can you tell me, Peter," says my fair lady, smilingly, "why tobacco-smokers are like auctioneers?"

"I presume, madam, because they are both great puffers."

"Quite right, Peter; so now proceed."

Well, after a prolonged silence, the squire, as examples, whether good or bad, are wont to be followed, followed the example set him by the rector, and volunteered a tale. He proposed to relate to us the life and adventures of the sixth widow. He took a preliminary draught of a deliciously cold claret-cup, and thus began.

"Virginia, my dear," said an aged, retired army officer, to a fair girl, his only child, "lay aside your book, for you must be tired of reading to me."

"Not if it amuses you, dear papa; you know I have been so much used to it, that I am not easily fatigued. The book, too, is so interest-

ing, that I long to finish it, and learn the fate of the hero and heroine."

"You are a good girl, Virginia, and were it not for you I know not what I should do. My wounded leg keeps me a close prisoner, and my eyes, shrouded in Egyptian darkness by that cruel ophthalmia, are useless to me."

"How grateful ought I to be, then, to my poor lost mother, who gave me such a taste for reading, that the duty of amusing you is not a task, but a pleasure!"

"A pleasure that you must not indulge in to the injury of your health, my child. You are as fair and delicate as your mother, who, I fear, shortened her earthly career by confining herself to the unwholesome air of a sick room, anticipating every wish, and supplying every want, of her helpless husband. You must take more exercise, child, and be more in the fresh air."

"Indeed, I am very well, papa, and I cannot go out and leave you alone," said Virginia, throwing her arms round his neck, and kissing his cheek, imbrowned by the sun of Egypt.

"I am never alone, dearest; one is always

with me—one whom, were it not for quitting thee, and leaving thee to the mercies of a cruel world, I would gladly join, never more to part from her; but go, my child—go and enjoy in the fields about us the pure fresh air of heaven. There, wipe away those tears that I feel falling on my face, and return to me cheerful and happy.”

“Well, I will go, papa, since you wish it. There, I have thrown open the window, that you may hear the birds sing, to amuse you while I am gone. I shall not be absent long.”

“Nay, hurry not on my account; my thoughts will amuse me, for I will think of you, and all your kindnesses to your father; besides, my young friend, Philip Darnton, promised to see me soon, and I think it not improbable he may perform his promise to-day.”

“I hope he may, papa, for Mr. Darnton is so cheerful and amusing in his conversation, that he always leaves you happier than he found you. I think he will come, for he has but little business to attend to.”

“I wish he had more, Virginia; but a young barrister cannot command briefs and consul-

tations; he must wait until experience and opportunity ensure him success. I heartily hope that some opportunity may occur ere long to our friend Darnton of showing to the world that he has abilities of no common order. It would ensure him business; and it is of great consequence to him that he should be employed, for his means, I fear, are very small."

"But you know, papa, that he told us he was turning his attention to literature, and had written a paper for one of the periodicals, which had been accepted."

"Literary employment, my child, is very well as an adjunct, but too precarious for a sole dependency. None but those who live by their talents for writing, especially works of fiction, can form the slightest notion of the wear and tear of the brain, when it is called upon constantly and regularly to supply subjects for the pages of a novel, or the sketchy articles of a periodical."

"But, then, consider, my dear papa, the fame that he will gain, and the introductions into high society that will follow!" said Vir-

ginia, with sparkling eyes, and in an exulting tone.

“ Child, child, you know not what you are saying. If Darnton were a man of fortune or of high birth, a reputation as a clever author might give him an additional step in the ladder of society ; but, rely upon it, that the man who writes for a subsistence is rarely courted out of his own set. Fame is all very well when it ensures a publisher’s cheque, and enables the man who gains it to appear and live as a gentleman. But begone, or we shall waste the day in talking.”

Virginia’s eyes ceased to sparkle ; her face bore an air of despondency as she turned and left the room. With a slow step, she passed through the village of Hornsey, where her father had hired a small cottage suited to his small income, for he had but his half-pay and a pension for his wounds.

She had not been gone above a quarter of an hour, during which the nearly sightless soldier was employed in calling down the blessings of God upon his affectionate child, when the little garden-gate was opened, and the girl

who waited on the family showed Philip Darnton into the sitting-room without announcing him, for he was the only visitor of her master, and she thought it a superfluous trouble.

Philip was rather a good-looking man, but his eyes appeared too brilliant for his pale cheeks. His long, wavy, auburn hair, of which, in truth, he was rather proud, fell on each side of a high forehead, already wrinkled by much thought and deep study. His figure was slight and rather tall, but quite symmetrical. His dress was plain, but in very good taste. His dark olive frock-coat fitted him neatly; a pair of grey trousers were confined to a well-made boot; his summer waistcoat was not bedizened with chains and seals; and a plain black silk handkerchief was artlessly but neatly tied round his neck. No enormous shirt-pins or gingerbread studs disfigured his neatly-plaited front. In short, Philip Darnton was a gentleman, and dressed "as such."

"Good morning, Captain Emmerson, good morning," said Darnton, cheerfully — indeed more so than usual.

"Glad to see you — I was going to say —

glad you are come to see me," replied the captain, extending his hand, which the young man took affectionately, and retained in his own. "I am alone, and shall be glad to have a chat with you. Virginia is gone for a walk, for I fear for her health. She is very delicate, very. I cannot lose her, Darnton; she is my sole hope and dependence in this world. She is a good child—an exemplary daughter."

"She is, indeed, sir," said Philip, energetically, and pressing the hand which he held. "So good a daughter cannot fail to make a most excellent wife."

"Wife! my young friend? Virginia will never quit her father while he lives; and, when he is gone, who would marry a girl dowerless, except as to her virtues?"

"Marry! I—that is, my dear sir," replied Philip, stammering, "I—would gladly make her mine. I have long wished to speak to you on the subject which you have so opportunely introduced. Ever since I have known Miss Emerson...."

"Almost three months," said the captain, ironically.

"... I have admired her. Her beauty first attracted my attention; her virtues and her filial piety have won my heart. I love her, sir; and if, as you say, you are under an obligation to me—though I think but little of the service I rendered you—discharge the obligation by allowing me to express my feelings to your daughter, and to hope for your approval if I find those feelings reciprocated."

"Young man," said the captain, "I esteem you highly; nor do I know any one on whom I would so readily bestow my child's hand if her heart was yours. I believe you to be possessed of high principles. I know that you are talented and persevering. You saved my life by stopping the horses of a carriage, which would have run over me as I crossed the road. You have been kind and attentive to me since. Though my eyes are nearly sightless, my other faculties are quickened. My ears are good, and the tones of your voice, when speaking to my child, almost convinced me of what I am now sorry to hear you confess."

"Sorry, sir!—why?"

“Because I am compelled to reject your suit.”

“In what have I offended, sir?” said Philip, sorrowfully.

“Offended? in nothing; but it would be making you an ungrateful return for the favours you have conferred upon me, were I to permit you, whose sole dependence is on your professional success, to cramp your energies and waste your valuable time in paying attentions to one who, when I am gone—and something whispers to me that time is near at hand—will be penniless.”

“My profession, the law, sir, is not my only means of support. I have tried literature, and I have been successful. You cannot see, sir, but you can feel; here is a cheque, my first cheque, for an article in the ———. I am engaged as a constant contributor on liberal terms. I am also engaged on a novel, and I feel I shall succeed. I know I shall make a hit, for I feel that the power of pleasing the public is in me. I shall be able to make more than enough by my pen to support a wife—ay, and a family.”

he with them? It was possible; indeed, it was a very good arrangement, for he would have more society, and be more cheerful and happy. But did Philip love her? She did not doubt it, though he had "never told his love." Would he ask her to marry him—her who was, or rather would be, portionless, to marry him who had not the means of supporting her?

Virginia was saved the pain of trying to solve this difficult problem, by an occurrence that changed her doubts of Philip's wish to unite his fate to hers to fears for her personal safety.

She had wandered from the lanes and fields into the high-road that leads to London. She heard steps approaching her, and, on raising her eyes from the bouquet she had gathered, saw two sturdy beggars, dressed as sailors, coming up close behind her. She turned suddenly round, and walked hastily by them towards her home. They followed her, soliciting alms, and telling the usual lies of being "poor Jack Tars, who had been cast away, and lost their all."

She assured them that she had nothing with her to relieve their wants, and hurried on as fast as she could. They followed her, increasing their speed as she increased hers, but offered her no insult until they reached the gate of a field which stood open. She felt herself suddenly seized by both her arms and forced into the field. She screamed as loudly as she could; but one of the ruffians placed his hand over her mouth, while the other proceeded to search for her pockets.

She felt faint and ill, but, making a sudden exertion, threw the men from her, and rushed back towards the gate, screaming more loudly than before. She fled swiftly, for fear aided her flight; but, just as she reached the gate, she was overtaken and thrown to the ground.

The villains, finding that she had no money about her, proceeded to strip off her clothes, and had deprived her of her shawl and bonnet, when she heard a footstep on the hard road. She shrieked Murder! and one of the ruffians raised his hand to strike her in the face, but, before his blow fell, he was laid on the ground at her side, and the blood gushed

from his nose in torrents. The other fellow, seeing a young man about to treat him in the same manner as he had treated his companion, avoided the stick which was aimed at his head, and ran off.

Philip Darnton—for it was he—allowed the other ruffian to follow after he had given him a sound thrashing, and did all he could to calm the agitation of Virginia before he restored her to her father's arms.

They had to walk but one little mile, but they were nearly an hour in accomplishing the distance. What delayed them the reader must imagine. It will be enough to say, that when they arrived at the cottage, Virginia threw herself on her father's neck, and told him of the insults to which she had been subjected, and how Philip Darnton had rescued her from the hands of her persecutors.

"You have placed me under another obligation, Philip," said the captain. "How can we repay him, my child?"

"By giving me the right to be her protector for the future," replied Philip.

"And what says my girl to that?"

Virginia whispered a few words into her father's ear.

“ Take her, Philip, she is yours,” said the old soldier, “ and may Heaven bless you both ! ”

CHAPTER L.

Six months had passed after the interview we have just recorded. Philip Darnton's novel had been finished and published, in spite of the many hours he had lost in his visits to Hornsey. Its success was great; and he not only received the congratulations of those friends who were in his secret—for he had published anonymously—but a present from his publisher, and a request that every future work which he undertook should be offered to him.

Need I say, that the successful author hastened as quickly as he could to Hornsey, to communicate the happy tidings to his loved one and her father? Need I add, that Virginia shed tears of joy as she fell upon his

neck, and that the sightless soldier pressed affectionately the joined hands that were placed in his.

“ God be thanked !—God be thanked, my young friend !” said the old man, fervently ; “ had you failed, it would have broken my heart, for my child loves you, Philip, with all the strength of a virgin affection, and had you not succeeded, it would have been my painful duty to have crushed her young hopes.”

“ But now, dear sir, that the experiment has succeeded—succeeded beyond my warmest expectations—you will not oppose our union longer ? I know that by my pen I can support your daughter in comfort, and trust that professional employment will shortly enable me to do so in luxury.”

“ I will offer no further opposition to your marriage, Philip. Consult with my child, and on the day she fixes she shall be yours, but upon one condition.”

“ Name it,” said Philip.

“ That you live with me in my humble cottage for the few months that remain to me on

earth. I cannot part from my child until I am summoned from her by Him who gave me such a blessing."

"Father, dear father, we will never leave you," said Virginia, quitting Philip's arm, and throwing herself on the old man's neck, "we never dreamed of leaving you. But do not speak in so melancholy a tone, or you will turn our happiness into misery."

"Many years, I trust," said Philip, "will see us living cheerfully and happily together."

"Philip Darnton, my son—for so henceforth will I call you—the hand of death is already upon me: although his grasp be but feeble as yet, he will not relax it. Daily shal I feel it grow stronger, closing upon me with harder grip. I do not wish to throw it off for my infirmities render life scarcely desirable; yet life without this dear child would be a blank, and the short span that remains to me must be passed with her to cheer and comfort me."

As the aged sufferer spoke these words, slowly but firmly, he turned his sightless eye-

balls to heaven, and the tears fell from them on the hands of Philip and Virginia, as they pressed his within their own. They gazed at him silently and sorrowfully, for the words carried a conviction to their hearts that he had spoken truly.

“Go, my children, go, leave me for a time. My feelings have overpowered me. Let me commune with mine own heart in private, and when you return to me you shall find me cheerful and resigned.”

He dropped their hands when he had spoken these words, and Philip led Virginia from the room.

During their short absence, every thing was arranged between them, and the following Monday was fixed upon for the wedding. This was communicated to the captain, whom they found, as he had assured them they should find him, cheerful and happy. Never more, from that time until the day of his death, did he allow a murmur or even a sigh to escape him, to cast a cloud on the happiness of his children.

Philip Darnton had no friends to consult

on the subject of his marriage. He was a natural son of an eminent solicitor, who gave him an excellent education, and would have provided for him amply in his will, had he not had an insuperable objection to making one. He, however, was among the number of those who cannot believe, with the late Dr. Kitchener, that there is "a pleasure in making a will." He thought that there was time enough for that when he became old and sickly, and that if he did it in full health and strength, he should be signing his own death-warrant. The consequence was that he neglected doing it until it was too late.

He was walking, apparently in the enjoyment of perfect health, in the garden of his country-house, and giving directions to his gardener, when he was seized with an attack of apoplexy, and never spoke afterwards.

His brother, who succeeded to his property, was an avaricious man, and had always abused him for wasting his money on the education and support of a child who had no legal claim upon him. He gave Philip, how-

ever, a note of £100 value, and told him that that was all he could do for him.

As there were no friends to be consulted, and no lawyers to be employed in making settlements and fixing the amount of pin-money, the ceremony was not delayed. A licence was procured, and the parson of Hornsey united as happy and as cheerful a pair as ever entered the walls of its pretty little church.

Mr. and Mrs. Darnton did *not* pass the honeymoon at a watering-place, or in an elegant and retired mansion lent to them by some kind friend or relation; but, as our forefathers used to do of old, returned to their own home, and after spending a pleasant evening at their own fireside, sought their happiness under their own roof.

Swiftly and pleasantly flew the hours, to all the occupants of the little cottage at Hornsey. Philip went daily to his chambers after an early breakfast, and having passed the morning in literary pursuits, and in reading up a certain quantity of law, he returned home to a late dinner. After dinner, a little

pleasant chat over the wine, and the last new book read aloud over the tea-table, whiled away the hours until midnight warned them to seek repose.

This sort of life might have become monotonous and dull after a time, had it not been occasionally relieved by the visits of some literary men, who had sought for and obtained the friendship of Philip Darnton. They walked over with him and shared his frugal meal, for he did not feel inclined or justified in giving what is vulgarly called "a regular spread." He thought, and was right in thinking, that if his friends visited him for the sake of his society, they would not require three courses, and an extravagant dessert, to make his society more agreeable, and that they could drink to his health and future success in a glass of good port or sherry, with as much satisfaction as in a goblet of expensive claret or champagne.

He, of course, received in return invitations to the houses of his friends, but he rarely accepted them, as he did not wish to go out without his wife, and Virginia did not

feel willing to leave her father to his own unamused thoughts.

It was necessary, however, to keep all invitations concealed from the captain, who was not at all a selfish person, and would have insisted on their being accepted, for he thought that the more his son-in-law went into society, the more his talents and high moral character would be appreciated, and the more his daughter would be delighted by seeing the admiration and esteem which her husband could not fail of obtaining.

Among several invitations that were sent to the cottage, and carefully concealed from the old soldier, was one which Philip could not refuse. It came from one of the first literary men of the day, at whose table it was a very high honour to obtain a seat. He was unknown, except by fame, to Philip Darnton, but the note was expressed in a manner so kind and complimentary, that he was flattered and charmed by it, and resolved to accept the invitation, although Mrs. Darnton was not included in it.

He left her therefore with her father, and,

for the first time since their marriage, determined upon sleeping at his chambers, instead of returning home at night, as he justly anticipated that they might sit unusually late for him.

The captain jokingly warned him not to be intoxicated with wit or wine, but to keep sober, and to store up in his memory all the good things that he should hear, and thus be able to repeat them for their amusement.

Philip went to Brompton, and found his new friend located in a pretty little villa, hidden from the road by a thick plantation of trees and shrubs. He was cordially welcomed, and introduced to four gentlemen, strangers to him, but whose names were familiar to his ear as being "the staff" of one of the best periodicals of the day, which was under the direction of their host.

Within a few minutes of his arrival, dinner was announced, and he found himself seated at a circular table, well covered with "all the delicacies of the season." As soon as the covers were removed, the servants retired, and did not appear again until a signal was

given them, by means of a small hand-bell. Their attendance was rendered unnecessary, except to change the courses, by a dumb-waiter, containing wines, sauces, and every thing that could be required, being placed within reach of the chairs. Thus the guests could help themselves, and converse without restraint, and without the good things that were let out over the good things that were taken in, being repeated and commented upon in the regions below.

The sparkling wine, and the more sparkling wit, the poignant jest, and the ready repartee, flew around the board. Philip was too much pleased to talk. He listened eagerly, and his twinkling eyes and hearty laugh delighted the talkers. His evident relish of their jokes and puns stimulated them to exert themselves the more, and never, probably, had the round table in the little villa at Brompton been more cheerfully and happily surrounded.

When the cloth was removed, and the olives and wine placed on the table—for the epicurean host never allowed fruits and

sweets to spoil the flavour of his pure Lafitte—the fun grew faster and more furious. Extemporaneous verses were recited, songs sung, conundrums—classical and common-place—invented and answered, or “given up,” and answered by the inventors themselves; anecdotes were told; adventures related; new books criticised, and their authors “cut up,” or praised as they deserved; plays, players, and periodicals were disposed of in short but pithy sentences, and publishers praised or blamed as they encouraged or crushed talent.

Philip, as I have said, was too much pleased at hearing others talk to be a talker himself; but his host, who, among his other talents, possessed a wondrous facility for “bringing out” his guests, gradually drew him into conversation, at first with himself, and then with the company generally.

When he saw that his shyness was removed, and that he was sufficiently excited by the wine which he had drank, he proposed his health, as the successful author of the last new novel.

The toast was received and drank in a way highly gratifying to the feelings of a young *débutant* on the stage of letters; and Philip, much to his own surprise, made a most excellent speech in return, which was listened to and applauded by his admiring friends.

The ice once broken, Darnton plunged over head and ears into the stream of fun, and, ere the evening closed, had said many a good thing, which was considered "worth booking" by the old stagers around him.

Ere he quitted the party, which was not done until the timepiece pointed to the morning hours, he had received invitations from every one present; but the most gratifying of all was from the Great Lion himself, who told him, in a tone the sincerity of which could not be mistaken, to visit him in his den, whenever he wanted an adviser or a friend.

When Philip reached his chambers he was not intoxicated with excess of wine, though he had drunk freely; but he was so much excited by all he had heard and done, that he could not sleep. He fell, it is true, into short dreamy slumbers, from which he was roused

by the imaginary voices and the fancied peals of laughter of his companions of the night.

With the first gleam of dawn he arose feverish and unrefreshed, and resolved to cool his heated body, and calm his excited mind, by walking home to breakfast.

As he walked across the fields—for there were fields, and not merely brick-fields, in those days, between London and Hornsey—he endeavoured to recall to his mind some of the witticisms, puns, and stories, which he had listened to the night before, in order to be able to repeat them to Virginia and her father. How they would smile at some sly hit!—how they would laugh at some well-timed jest!—how they would fairly roar at some exceedingly shocking bad pun, and be puzzled at some deeply-seated point of a riddle! Philip laughed as he thought of the laughter he should excite in them. Long before he had reached his home, by the exercise he had taken and the thoughts he had indulged in, his body and mind were refreshed and exhilarated.

With brilliant eye and smiling face he

reached the garden-gate. Two or three active springs cleared the gravelled path ; his hand was on the latch, and he was about to open the door, when the unusual appearance of the cottage struck him. Surely it was not so very early in the morning, and yet the shutters were closed on the lower windows, and the blinds of the upper ones drawn closely down. He looked at his watch, but he had forgotten to wind it up, and could not ascertain the hour. The sun was up high in the heavens, and the shadows thrown by the trees were much shortened on the ground. He thought it must be long past the time when the family, early in their habits, usually arose. The church clock struck, and, when Philip had counted eight distinct notes of its musical bell, he felt a conviction within him that all was not well within the cottage.

With trembling hand he turned the handle of the lock and opened the door. He searched the parlours and the back premises to find the servant, but she was nowhere to be found. He crept stealthily up stairs and gently opened his bedroom door. The room was unoccupied,

but the bed had evidently been tenanted. His heart told him that he must seek his wife in the apartment of her father; and that that father—the wounded, sightless warrior—was either dead or dying.

He stole to the door and listened. Sobs, deep and convulsive, reached his ear, mingled with the subdued tones of a manly, sonorous voice; but the voice was the voice of a stranger. He opened the door, and saw the old man lying in the long sleep of death. By his side knelt his daughter, sobbing as if her heart would break, and over her stood the clergyman of Hornsey, pouring into her unheeding ear such words of consolation as his sacred office and kind heart suggested to him.

Philip knelt down by Virginia's side, and took her hand in his. She knew who was beside her, although she looked not at him; but, pointing at the corpse before her, she shrieked "He is dead!" and fell fainting into her husband's arms.

Philip, with the assistance of the clergyman, conveyed her to her room, and left her

to the care of the maid, who had returned from seeking a messenger to send to him at his chambers and apprise him of what had taken place.

Philip afterwards learned that Virginia, on rising in the morning, had gone into her father's room, as was her custom, and found him a corpse. He must have died soon after he retired to bed, for the body was stiff and cold. Still she would not believe that he was dead; but sent the maid, whom her screams had summoned to the room, for the doctor.

He was from home—and the poor girl, not daring to return without some one to aid and assist them, wisely called up the clergyman, who readily yielded to her wishes, and accompanied her, to comfort and cheer the mourner.

CHAPTER LI.

After the remains of Captain Emmerson had been deposited in the churchyard of Hornsey, and a small tablet was erected to his memory, the Darntons, who could not remain in a scene where every thing reminded them of their loss, left the cottage, and went to reside in a small house in the neighbourhood of Russell Square.

Philip still retained his chambers in the Temple, and passed his mornings there, hoping that a brief might find its way there, and working hard with his pen. He would gladly have laid aside the "gray-goose quill" for a time, for he was not in the humour to invent amusement for the public, in the grief and sorrow of his heart; but stern necessity bade

him not to hold his hand. The expenses of the funeral, the removal from Hornsey, and the furnishing of the new house, had nearly exhausted his resources, and he was obliged to work to provide his daily bread.

As to a brief, Philip was not lucky enough to gain one. He had no personal friend among the solicitors, and, though his name was already divulged, as the clever author of the last new novel, and of a series of brilliant articles in the ——— *Review*, somehow or another the lawyers thought that a man who was so very much engaged in literary pursuits was not calculated to work up the dry details of a chancery case. They shook their heads mysteriously if any body suggested that he was a rising man, but never gave him an opportunity of rising even to make a half-guinea motion.

Philip hoped and hoped until his heart grew sick of hoping; and about twelve months after leaving Hornsey, he felt disgusted with his profession, gave up his chambers, and all thoughts of succeeding at the bar. He made up his mind to devote himself entirely to

literature, and removed his books and desk to his little study at home.

Virginia was pleased at this change in his mode of life, as she had much more of his company than she had when he went daily to his chambers. She would slip quietly into his study with her work, and sit down by his side for hours, without speaking unless he addressed her. By degrees she became useful to him, by saving him the trouble of consulting books of reference, and copying out in her own clear hand his almost illegible MS., and at last taught herself how to correct the proof-sheets that were sent to him by the printer.

By a steady perseverance in this mode of life for nearly two years, during which period they saw but little company, the Darntons found themselves the possessors of a few hundred pounds, and Philip resolved to have a little relaxation from labour, by taking a tour on the continent. The day was fixed for their departure, and they were anticipating a very agreeable trip, when their arrangements were suddenly set aside by an unexpected, but far from disagreeable event.

Philip received a note by the post from his friend at Brompton, of whom he had seen but little since the death of his father-in-law, in which he begged him to meet him at the house of a publisher in the far west of London, but to mention the appointment to no one. Philip went, and was agreeably surprised by a very handsome offer, if he would, anonymously, and preserving the strictest secrecy, take the sub-editorship of a journal which was about to be established by the publisher, under the editorship of his Brompton friend, who was not to appear in the business, but to transact every thing through the medium of his sub-editor, whose person was not as yet generally known.

This offer was too liberal and too agreeable to be refused. He entered upon this office with zeal and discretion. The journal came out, and caused "a sensation," as it is called. The articles were so clever, and so very "spicy," the knowledge displayed of aristocratic sayings and movements so accurate, that it soon became very popular, and remunerated the spirited publisher for his liberal outlay of capital.

But "who writes for the ——?" was the question in the mouth of every one. No one knew, yet every body had a shrewd guess that it was A. B. C., or X. Y. Z. "He knew it was his style. There could not be a doubt about it; besides, was he not seen coming out of the publisher's house, with a cloak on, late one evening? and did not he visit the countess whose little indiscretion had been so funnily but so severely exposed?"

The secret, however, was admirably preserved. Philip was proposed by a third party as a member of a club, to which his Brompton friend belonged, and where he was introduced to him in due form, as to a perfect stranger. The club were not surprised that the lion should cultivate the friendship of a young and successful author, and while they were supposed to be laughing and talking over their little table about things in general, the particular business of the journal was transacted—papers were exchanged, hints given and received in a few minutes, and then the conspirators against the sober looks and long faces of the public joined in the general conversation and fun of the smoking-room or supper-table.

Virginia, like most married ladies, was not very well pleased at her husband's joining a club. It kept him out late at night, and she was not quite certain of what was done there ; still she could not complain when Philip told her that he merely used the club-house as a sort of house of call for literary men, and that much of his literary employment was arranged therein. This he told her without disclosing to her the nature of the employment upon which he was engaged. As she accompanied him out to various parties, for their acquaintances were gradually becoming more numerous, she could hardly complain that he should be dropped at his club on their way home, "just for ten minutes," though those ten minutes were sometimes very, very long ones.

This, perhaps, was the most agreeable portion of Philip Darnton's literary career. He was earning a certain and sufficient income, without being, by name, much before the public, and consequently but little assailed by the critics of the public press, who, by the by, generally speaking, are a very goodnatured

continuations, the one of a satirical poem, and the other of a violent political tirade, written, the former in the handwriting of Philip Darnton, and the latter of his friend the lion of Brompton. The secret then was in the keeping of the greatest busybody and babbler on the town, and before the afternoon of next day, all the town was gratified by the sight of the continuations intended for the —, inserted in the columns of an opposition journal, with the names of the writers affixed to them.

Mr. Paul Pry having done all the mischief he could, absconded, for fear of leaden consequences. The lion and Philip Darnton could not deny their own handwriting, but pleaded guilty. The character of the journal was immediately changed, and what had been the most piquant paper of the day sank down into a matter-of-fact record of accidents and offences, and home and foreign affairs.

But Philip Darnton and his editor, though they lost their employment—for the mask being taken from the faces of these *terra filii*, they could not indulge in the luxuriance of

their satire, and were obliged to write mere commonplace twaddle, became notorious men about town. Their company was courted by all who admired their talents, and more so by those who dreaded their satirical powers. It was, however, an unenviable as well as an unprofitable notoriety, for they had to bear the weight of sins which they had not committed, and dared not indulge in the same freedoms, as they had hitherto done, with impunity.

Among the many men to whom the notoriety of Philip introduced him, was a young nobleman, who had relished the columns of the —, and was glad to know the clever writers of them. He was a great sportsman, and every shooting-season filled his house with destroyers of partridges and pheasants, and to amuse them after their murders were over, took care to invite a few wits and comic singers, to enliven the evening until the card-tables were set out in his drawing-room. Could he do better than invite Philip Darnton? No; for the lion of Brompton, as he boasted, never travelled out of the smell of London smoke.

Philip consented to pay a visit for a fortnight, and in an evil hour his good genius deserted him, and allured him to take a gun in his hand, and follow to the field this crack-shot lord. Now Philip knew just this much of a gun—that he was not to put the muzzle to his shoulder, and was to pull a bit of iron when he wished to “let off his piece.” His noble friend, believing that his clever guest must know every thing, did not think it necessary to instruct him in the art of loading a gun; and Philip, not liking to acknowledge his ignorance in any thing, did not ask for information, but made up his mind to imitate all his host’s movements.

His lordship poured a charge of powder down each barrel, and put a charge of shot in each, ramming it down tightly. Philip put two charges of powder and two of shot into his gun, which was a *single*, whereas his host’s was a *double*; the consequence was that, the first time he fired, the barrel burst, and shattered his right hand so severely that he was obliged to submit to immediate amputation.

Who can describe Philip’s feelings when

the amputation was over, and he began to think of the consequences of his hurt? He could write no more, and how was he to obtain means of support? He would gladly have laid him down and died.

CHAPTER LII.

A long illness followed the accident, more from mental agitation than from any serious results likely to ensue from the wound or the operation. His noble host paid every attention, and showed every kindness to his guest; but as soon as the surgeon declared that he might be removed with safety, Philip returned to his home, and put himself under the care of his tender wife. To her he revealed the cause of his excessive grief; but she speedily consoled him, by assuring him that she could and would write to his dictation, as soon as he was sufficiently recovered to make the experiment. This load removed from his mind, the wound healed rapidly, and his general health was sufficiently restored to enable him

to set about preparing his article for the —— *Review*, on which he was still engaged.

It was a work of labour and toil, to both the dictator and the writer. Few persons are aware that it takes sixty sides of closely-written letter-paper to make up one sheet of sixteen pages of a magazine, and what it requires but one quarter of an hour to read occupies some days in the writing. Virginia, however, worked on steadily, and bore all the peevishness of her husband with a calmness and good-humour which gradually worked upon his feelings, and caused him to be less distrustful of the blessings of Providence, and less inclined to murmur at his hard lot. The work of dictating became less difficult as he became more used to it, and he learnt to use his left hand so as to be able to note down on a slate the heads of his various subjects.

The fear of absolute starvation being removed, Darnton became almost cheerful; but he would see no one—not even his friend and former editor. In this he was wrong and ungrateful, for he had done much for him, and would have helped him even now had he per-

mitted him. Philip could not bear to be seen in his crippled state, and dreaded the ridicule with which he thought he should be assailed in consequence of the loss of his hand. His wife did all she could to disabuse his mind of these fancies; but he treated her arguments with disdain, and at last refused to listen to them at all.

Virginia worked patiently on, and secluded herself from all society. The close confinement injured her health, but she complained not. Her husband, wrapped up in his thoughts on his own hard lot, did not observe the change that was daily taking place in her appearance. She grew nervous and timid, and her eyes, sunk deep in her head, almost refused to do their office, and her hand, weak and trembling, could scarcely execute its daily task.

Still would she have persevered uncomplainingly, had not a circumstance occurred which for a time released her from her toil. The — *Review*, on which her husband was permanently, as he thought, engaged, changed hands, and the new proprietor wished to employ some friends whose sentiments accorded

more with his own than those of Philip Darn-ton did. His contributions were politely declined, and he found himself, for a time, without any occupation. What could he do? He knew not. The magazines were open to him, but it might be some months before room could be found to insert his articles. Could he write a novel? Yes; but it would take a long time to complete it, and what was he to do in the meanwhile? Virginia wished him to consult his former friends, but he felt that he had lost them by his folly, and would not consent to solicit a renewal of their friendship.

He gave up his house, sold his furniture, and many of his books, and retired to an humble lodging "over the water," as the Surrey side of the river is called. There he lived in obscurity on the proceeds of the sale of his goods, and on the few pounds which were due to him from the late proprietor of the ——— *Review*. He did try to write, but his brain failed him when he discovered the state to which he had reduced his beloved and patient partner. A long illness followed, his

funds were exhausted, and debts incurred, trifling, it is true, to all but the doctor, who professed to be a great friend to the distressed author.

Virginia believed him to be such, and placed great confidence in him. She told him every thing—all their past hopes and successes—all their present poverty and despair. He bade her be comforted, and attend to the recovery of her own health. She did so, and under his directions recovered her good looks and her former spirits. She believed him to be a protecting angel to her, but he proved himself to be a demon, for, scarcely had she recovered her health, and her beauty had returned to her, than he made proposals to her, which she rejected with the scorn and contempt they merited.

His attempts to seduce her from her fidelity to her husband were renewed without success, and, from entreaties, the villain proceeded to threats, not against herself, but against her husband, whom he threatened to throw into prison, for the debt he owed him. Virginia told him that she despised his threats as

much as she did himself, and ordered him not to intrude upon her any more.

But one day passed, and her husband was thrown into prison. The villain had sworn that he who could scarcely turn in his bed meditated flying the kingdom, and avoiding his creditors. A writ was obtained, and, while Virginia was out procuring a few necessities for the sick man, he was dragged from his bed, and hurried to his cell.

Virginia followed, and bade him hope. He smiled gratefully, but whispered that hope was dead within him. Virginia gazed on him sorrowfully, for she saw despair in his eye — death in his face. She thought that he might be saved, and she left him to execute a plan she had hit upon. She pawned her wedding-ring — the last article a wife ever parts with — and hired a carriage to convey her to Brompton. She sent in her name to her husband's friend, and was admitted instantly. She told him all, as briefly as possible, and asked his aid. He, with tears in his eyes, placed a note-case in his pocket, took a seat by her side in the carriage, and ordered the

man to drive as rapidly as he could to the Marshalsea. On the way he did all he could to comfort the wife, by assuring her that the debt should be paid, and her husband released.

When they arrived at the prison, they found that the *debt*—the debt of nature—*was paid*, and her husband *released*—by DEATH.

Through the interest of her husband's literary friend, who was an old college chum of Mr. Lauderley, Virginia Darnton became the sixth unfortunate admitted into

THE WIDOWS' ALMSHOUSE.

CHAPTER LIII.

As Jonathan's story ended with his second cigar, and the tankard was emptied of its contents, we refused Mr. Tit Dowell's offer of further supplies, and set out upon our walk to the Mount, while the parson toddled home, by a different road, on his pony, which had been sent for him.

My week's holiday was nearly over, and I was rather melancholy at the thought of leaving my old friend and the lovely spot in which he was located; for it might be years, I thought, before I saw either of them again. These meditations made me a silent and sad companion to my host, who, after making some very brilliant remarks on the brilliancy of the night, and, in merry mood, throwing

out sundry hints at the bachelor-like habits of Mr. Tit Dowell, observed my unwonted taciturnity.

“Why, how now?” said he, laying his by no means light hand upon my shoulder, “art moon-struck, or planet-struck, or what ails thee? Give tongue, man, that I may know by the note what scent thou art upon.”

I passed my arm through his, and merely sighed, “What ails thee? Does not the good fare of Tit Dowell sit lightly on thy bosom’s throne? or hath the wine, like an old maid’s face at forty, turned sour? A little pure *eau de vie*, when we get to the Mount, will prove a sovereign remedy for both complaints, and be fairly excused by the coldness of the vapours which hang over these woods at night.”

“Jonathan, my dear fellow,” said I, “my digestive powers and the wine are both too good to cause me any disturbance. I am sad because the time will soon arrive when I must leave my old schoolfellow and college friend to return to the drudgery of my study and my wifeless hearth. I have been very happy

here, and I cannot help fancying that we may never meet again."

"Pooh! nonsense!" — replied Jonathan, pressing my arm, which rested on his, against his heart. "Why should you leave me yet? — Stay a month or two longer. The library shall be held sacred for your whole and sole use, and there are plenty of pens, bottles of ink, and reams of paper. You can scribble and scrawl to your heart's content."

"But, my children," said I, "you forget that they, infants as they are, are left to the mercy of menials."

"Send for them down," said Jonathan — "there is plenty of room for them in my nursery, and I can answer for their having a kindly reception and good treatment from my old woman, as I call my youthful wife. There are plenty of bed-rooms to spare, and an extra maid can soon be hired in the village, and—"

"You are very kind," said I, interrupting the further unravelling of his plans, "but it is impossible. My engagements compel me to return home the day after to-morrow."

Let us hope that we may meet again ere long."

"Why should we not?—When your engagements allow of it, you have nothing to do but to jump on the coach and run down. You will be sure to find me here. Thank God, I am neither a member of parliament nor a man of fashion, to be obliged to exchange the beauties and fresh air of the Mount for the stifling atmosphere and hard flag-stones of London; so, if you must leave me now, console me with the hope of a speedy return. I will not press you to stay, because I know you do not need pressing by one who has lived with you as familiarly as with a brother."

"More so, I believe," said I—"and I swear to you, by Diana, who now shows her face as unblushingly to the world below as if she did not see the enormities committed in it, that, if we are both alive and well, I will be with you again as soon as Nature has renewed the leaves, which now come flitting by us and fall in our path, to remind us that all things must return to their parent earth."

“ A truce with your moralizing. It is too late at night to act the Melancholy Jaques in comfort. Here we are in the plantations by the lawn, and old Carlo is letting the butler know that his master expects the candles lighted, the fire stirred into a cheerful blaze, and the kettle placed upon the hob ready for his coming.”

After two or three deep, melodious notes, uttered as if on purpose to give notice to the family that the head of it was at hand, the fine old dog, a huge Newfoundland, rushed boundingly across the lawn, and, whining and wagging his tail to show his joy, popped his cold nose into our hands, and gambolled before us to the hall-door ; whence, having seen us duly admitted, he quietly retreated to his warm kennel.

“ As you cannot stay longer than the morrow,” said my friend, when the butler had left us to our fireside and parting glass, “ I will write a note to the parson, and ask him to join us at dinner with our friends from the almshouse.”

“ Why not call upon him in the morning ?”

said I; "I have had a great affection for a parsonage and a parish church, and should be glad to renew my acquaintance with their interiors."

"Well, then, I will drop you at Doctor Dowton's door, and call for you after I have ridden round the farms. You will not find him a dull companion, as you know, although he is a little prosy and given to sermonizing now and then out of his pulpit."

After writing a note to Mrs. Lauderley, telling her that she would be expected at the Mount on the following day with her husband, and as many of her widows as the omnibus would conveniently hold, Jonathan filled two glasses of warm mixture; and when we had quaffed them and settled our proceedings for the morning, we retired for the night.

The parish church of Mount Whistling is situated in the middle of the village, on the summit of a small mount, which resembles one of those barrows one meets with on the downs where, of old, armies contended in mortal struggles, and covered up their dead on the spots where they fell. It was a small

building, long and narrow, and at its western end had a short, thick, battlemented tower. Its windows were narrow, and shewed their antiquity by the roundness of the arches that covered them, and by the Saxon-shaped pilasters that supported the arches. The churchyard boasted of two fine yew-trees, which, from their size, seemed to be coeval with the building they adorned. A neat railing surrounded the burial-ground, in which the rude forefathers of the hamlet slept, and just within the gate stood an ancient cross, much dilapidated and covered with moss and dank vegetation, save on the lowest step of it, which was worn away, and kept clean and almost polished from being used as a seat by the elder poor, while they waited the parson's coming into church on a Sunday.

The rectory-house was built nearly opposite the churchyard gate. It was an old-fashioned, quaint-looking building, almost obscured from view by the old stone wall which surrounded it, and by a luxuriant row of fine old elms, which threw their long, gaunt arms across the road. A heavy sparred gate, which ever stood

open, as if inviting the poor of the village and the way-worn traveller to tax the hospitality of its owner, gave one a glimpse of the low, college-like building that seemed to nestle, as it were, in the midst of the protecting trees and shrubs. A vast profusion of all sorts of gay flowers relieved it from any appearance of dulness, and a large old vine crept its tortuous way along its front, amidst myrtles and jasmines, which grew there, regardless of frosts and nipping winds. The nicely-kept lawn and well-rolled gravelled paths showed that the parish-clerk, who acted as servant of all work to the rector, did not neglect his duties as gardener.

At the porch of the door lay a very obese and aged purblind spaniel, who, on hearing my approach, set up what he, perhaps, fondly imagined was a bark. It was a choking sort of half-yelp, half-growl, but it sufficed to bring a servant to the door before I could ring the bell. Old Rover, seeing I was admitted by the maid, ceased to give tongue, and, changing his martial air for a peaceful, nay, even fawning demeanour, wagged his tail

and whined, as he looked up in my face, to claim a caress. I love dogs, so I patted the old fellow, and he tried a gambol as he conducted me to his master's study.

Doctor Dowton was busy upon the sermon which I was conceited enough to believe he was composing, or compiling, for my especial benefit; little thinking, alas! that my engagements forbade me staying to listen to it. He was clad in a morning-gown, his feet were slippered, and on his head he wore a sort of velvet college-cap, which, added to "his spectacles on nose," gave him a very quaint appearance.

I explained the object of my calling, and though he seemed vexed to think that the day of my departure could not be postponed until the Monday, he willingly agreed to form one of the party at the Mount, and assist at my farewell dinner.

He apologized for leaving me for a few minutes while he changed his dress, and during his absence I amused myself by inspecting his book-shelves. They were well furnished with classics and the works of the

older divines; but upon one shelf I was surprised to find a whole row of volumes treating on farriery, the diseases and training of horses, mixed with several erudite treatises on hunting both hare and fox.

Was the rector a sportsman? I had never heard of it, and was sure that he did not now keep a hunter or any other variety of horse, but a very fat pony, who would have *craned* if he had attempted to leap over a straw. As I was skimming through Beckford, and casting my eyes over the prints in Geoffrey Gambado, the maid entered with a tray loaded with sandwiches and a decanter of sherry, to which she shortly added a peculiarly rich-looking Stilton and a jug of mantling ale, for which the rectory was celebrated.

When the rector returned, dressed in his proper clericals, we sat down and made a hearty meal off the Stilton, and relieved the brown jug of the greater portion of its contents. After giving his ale the praises due to its excellency, at which he was pleased, for he was justly proud of his tap, I took up Geoffrey Cambado, and, looking its owner sily

in the face, observed that it was a very amusing book, but—

“Not strictly canonical,” said he, smiling.

“It is a good book, however, and I like it.”

“And Beckford on hunting?” said I.

“Ah!” said he, “that’s a really useful work.”

“Sermons in stones,” began I.

“Pooh! pooh!” said he, interrupting my quotation. “You laymen fancy that a parson has nothing to do but eat, drink, and sleep, and write sermons; but I—did you ever read Somerville’s *Chace*? here it is. I have had him handsomely bound, you see, for he is my favourite author. Now, just listen to this passage.”

The rector stood up, put on his spectacles, threw out his right arm, and read a most spirited passage from the poet, which described the running into a fox in the open fields. As he progressed, he grew greatly excited, and when he had ended he closed the book with a slap, and shouted :—“ *Whoo-whoop!* ” so loudly, as to make the room ring again, and the glasses dance in the tray

"Did you call, sir?" said the maid, scuffling into the room, and looking alarmed.

I never saw a man appear much more "taken aback," as the sailors say, than the rector was. The colour left his cheeks, and, after giving me a very peculiar glance to see if I was laughing at him, which I certainly was, he stammered out something about not being able to find the bell, and ordered the luncheon to be removed.

"Very absurd! perfectly ridiculous!" said he, when the girl had left the room. "*You must* think me an old ass to be so excited at my time of life by the mere reading of a scene at which I have not been present for many years. The time was when —"

"You were a 'hunter bold,' I presume."

"I was, I was, my dear sir, I knew every hound by sight and name in two full packs, and generally showed my back to the whole field. You would be astonished at the immense collection I had of brushes, pads, and chops—a perfect museum—a vulpecidal curiosity—but I gave them all away. Heigho! when Brown Polly died under me, after a

straight run of twenty miles over a grass country, with double fences, I abjured the noble sport."

"Not thinking it consistent with your professional —"

"No such thing. I was convinced I should never be so well carried again. There, that is poor Polly's skin, that forms the covering of my easy-chair. You see it? a beautiful brown, black stripe down the back, and not a white hair in it. She stood fifteen three, and was fully equal to fifteen stone; I only rode twelve, so she could carry me over any thing. I never knew her refuse a leap but once, and that was because she was afraid of heading the fox, and spoiling the run."

The rector gazed intently on poor Brown Polly's skin, shook his head, and sighed deeply.

"Was she thorough-bred?" I inquired, more to relieve the parson's mind than out of curiosity to learn Polly's pedigree.

"No, no, only three parts—by Gobyem, out of a well-bred mare of Squire Dashingly's, who gave me the filly and this living."

"I thought," said I, "that this living belonged to my friend, Jonathan Sternpost."

"It does now; the Admiral bought the advowson soon after I was inducted, with some five hundred acres of land, which were sold by auction soon after Squire Dashingly's sudden death. He was an unlucky man, but behaved very kindly to me. Perhaps you never heard how and under what circumstances I obtained this rectory?"

"Never," I replied; "I always believed that you were presented to it by the Admiral."

"As you have some hours vacant before dinner, we will take a stroll round the parsonage-grounds and the glebe, and I will give you my little history as we walk," said the rector.

"But my friend Jonathan is to call for me when he has been round his farm," said I.

"That will not prevent your hearing what I have to communicate, for, like all agriculturists who do not depend entirely on their farms, he makes a toil of a pleasure, and wastes a great deal of valuable time in doing no-

thing," said the rector; "so let us saddle and start."

I obeyed, and the rector, whistling to old Rover to accompany us, told me, as we lounged round the parsonage-grounds, this his little history.

CHAPTER LIV.

I will not trouble you with a tedious account of my birth, parentage, and education, but merely inform you that my father was a respectable man, who, having realized a certain sum as a merchant in the good but dirty city of Bristol, thought it fitting and proper, as conducing to his health and happiness, to retire from business in the prime of his life.

He sold his country-house and water-side premises, together with certain strong-built copper-bottomed and copper-fastened, fast-sailing vessels, of various tons burthen, and with the proceeds thereof purchased a snug villa, "replete with every comfort, and surrounded by its own park-like paddocks."

Here he expected to set up country and county gentleman, to act as a Lord Bountiful and justice of the peace, and to be very happy.

He *was* very happy, so long as the fussiness attendant on the removal of his furniture and family lasted; but when he had transported his wife and seven children, with his household goods, and seen them all located in their proper places, Fir-tree Villa became very dull, indeed. He walked over the house some dozen times in the day, from the garrets to the cellarage, in hopes of finding something or another not done properly, or to his wishes; but in vain: his directions had been so plainly given, and his upholsterers and carpenters so attentive to his orders, that he could not find even a peg out of place whereon to hang a hope of having something more to do.

The internal arrangements being unfortunately completed, he turned his attention to the external. He examined the stables; but they were pronounced by his coachman to be perfect. The gardener declared that the hot-house and greenhouse were built upon the best of principles. The walls were of the precise

height they ought to be, and not a brick was out of place. As to trees, shrubs, and flowers, the former occupier had not left a foot of ground unplanted; and that, too, with the very evergreen, deciduous shrub, perennial, or annual, that was precisely adapted to the site which it filled. The palings of the park-like paddock were in good repair, and every ditch and drain about the grounds did its draining duty too effectually to need being cleaned out or repaired.

My father walked about with his hands in his pockets for a few days, in hopes that "something might turn up" to amuse or interest him. Nothing, however, did turn up; and so very wretched was he, that I believe he would have consented to live, like the cynic of Sinope, in a tub, provided the tub had but one hoop loose, or one stave out of place, to afford him occupation in the repair of it.

He became nervous and irritable, and vented his irritability upon my mother, myself, and my brothers and sisters, after he had practised upon the servants until they would stand it no longer, and gave notice to quit his service.

Our previously happy home became a very unhappy one. My mother kept to her room, or the nursery, to be out of the way. As piano and peg-tops were forbidden, battledore and shuttlecock, marbles and hoops, interdicted, the girls had nothing to do but whisper over their needlework; and we boys, not having that resource, to imitate our father, by walking about with our hands in our pockets and wishing ourselves back again in Bristol.

The hours spent over our meals were the only happy ones we passed; for the breakfast, luncheon, dinner, tea, and supper, afforded some enjoyment and occupation to the idle man, and they were better furnished and prolonged to a greater extent than usual, at the suggestion of our mother. Still, he could not be always eating and drinking; and what was he to do "between the eats?"

"Why not read, my love? You have a well-furnished library."

"Read! I *do* read, madam. I have spelt every word in the paper this morning, from its title to the printer's name and address."

"Yes, the paper; but why not try an interesting book?"

"Try! I have tried, madam; but my eyes ache, or I fall asleep, or one of those noisy children interrupts me, or...."

"Well, my love, I am sure I do not know what you *can* do," said my mother, sighing, "unless you get yourself appointed overseer, or churchwarden, or a county magistrate."

"Overseer! churchwarden! Pish! What! be worried to death with paupers and pews? Pish! It is neither agreeable nor respectable."

"But a county magistrate—one of the quorum...."

"I will think of that, madam—I *will* think of that. I am ready to devote myself to the service of my country; but I am afraid I am not qualified for the duties of a justice. It must require a deep insight into the laws—eh?"

"I rather think not," said my mother, quietly, "provided you look as if you had an insight into them, and have an efficient clerk."

My father lay down his knife and fork, and pondered awhile. He then drank his cup of coffee hastily, and bidding me, his eldest born, follow him, put on his hat and walked rapidly over to the village, at the little inn of which the justices met weekly, to sit at a petty sessions.

We heard at the bar that the justice-room was up-stairs, and that the magistrates were then assembled, and trying a desperate case of pauperism. We obtained admittance, and stood for some time amidst an assemblage of ragged people who formed the audience. After a time, however, the clerk, who knew my father by sight, as the new occupier of Fir-tree Villa, bade the constable clear the way and admit us behind the bar. The noise caused by the official in executing the order given drew the attention of the three gentlemen who were sitting in judgment with their hats on; to prove, I presume, that they were the representatives of majesty. They stared calmly and inquisitively at the stranger, whispered together, and then whispered to the clerk, who said something to them in a whis-

per, which induced them to favour us with another stare.

After this examination of us was over, the examination of the pauper was resumed ; and, as he could not deny that he had no money, in *esse* or *posse*, except what he earned by selling matches, or begging, he was fully committed as a rogue and vagabond. There being neither treadmill, solitary imprisonment, nor starvation diet-tables in those days, the poor fellow seemed to me to think himself a very fortunate man in being provided for at his country's expense.

As there was no more business before the court, the gentlemen rose, and the constable called out, "Make way, there." The audience scuffled about, and, amidst loud cries of "Silence, there, silence !" left the room.

My father and myself remained standing while the magistrates walked out. The last of the three, as he passed us, dropped his riding-stick. I stooped, picked it up, and restored it to him.

"Thank you, thank you," said he, smiling,

and patting my head. "You're a fine little fellow. What is your name?"

I told him.

"And this gentleman, I presume, is. . . ."

"My papa," said I. "We live at Fir-tree Villa."

Squire Dashingly—for it was he—lifted his hat, and bowed. My father returned the salutation. The other two magistrates, having had an example of good breeding set them, followed it, and even ventured to express their satisfaction in having been thus accidentally introduced to their new neighbour.

We returned home; and, either from the excitement of the walk, the occupation of several hours which would have hung heavily on hand, or the pleasurable prospect of acquiring desirable associates from this casual introduction to three country gentlemen, my father was less irritable and far more lenient to us boys than he had been for some days.

I wished there had been a magistrate's meeting every day, instead of once a week; but it was of no use wishing. The morning of the following day passed gloomily enough,

for my father knew not what to do with himself. My mother suggested to him that, as he would probably be placed on the bench by the lord-lientenant of the county, at no distant date, he had better provide himself with Burns's Justice, and such other law-books as are usually to be found on the shelves of country magistrates.

The idea seemed to please him ; and, while we were eating our luncheon, he ordered the carriage to be got ready to convey him to Bristol. It was too good an opportunity for my mother to make a few calls, and execute certain necessary shoppings, to be neglected ; so the carriage was filled, and nearly all the family, including myself, were conveyed to the busy city.

During our absence, Squire Dashingly called and left his name ; and, as soon as the fact of his having called on the retired merchant was made known to his brother magistrates, they rode out and followed his example. These visits were of course returned, and followed by invitations to dinners, at which he met several of his neighbours. After a while, it be-

came necessary for us to give what is termed a return dinner; and for this great preparations were made. It was a very happy time was this; for we were in a perpetual bustle. There was a messenger constantly occupied in going to and from Bristol, ordering this and counter-ordering that. The turtle soup was tasted and re-tasted, pronounced too thick, or not thick enough, and altered accordingly. The turbot was ordered; its exact size and thickness having been duly specified. The punch was concocted, and the madeira placed in a hot closet; the other wines selected and placed in cool cellars, to acquire the exact temperature necessary for putting them on the table in perfection. In brief, the usual fussiness displayed in families that are not in the daily habit of exhibiting the "best things," and the best of every thing, was going on, much to the delight of us little ones, and more to the delight of our parents.

The important day arrived, and passed off very pleasantly. The dinner was excellent—excellently cooked and served up. The wines were pronounced superb; and the greatest

proof of the estimation in which they were held was the quantity of them that was consumed.

I was permitted to remain after the ladies left the table, and when I had taken my one glass of claret — my usual allowance — was summoned by Squire Dashingly to sit by his side. He helped me to several glasses more, and my tongue run so fast that I was ordered out of the room ; but not before I had received an invitation to the Grange and the promise of a ride on a pony ; a promise of which I resolved to claim the performance the very first opportunity that presented itself.

My father was really, after this dinner, on a friendly footing with his neighbours, which might have grown into an intimacy, had he been able to join them in their sports, or chime in with them in their usual topics of conversation ; but he neither shot, hunted, nor fished ; and, while they were deep in the mysteries of turnpike-roadism, county rates, and poor laws, he could only enlighten them on the subjects of the prices current and the rise or fall in stocks, home and foreign. They were always

glad to see him ; but, although he attended all their meetings, and sat with them on the seats of honour, no mention was ever made to him of a wish that he would become one of them ; and the highest honour at which he arrived was having his name enrolled among the grand jury and the commissioners of highways.

He hoped, and hoped, but at last grew sick of hoping. J. P. and C. R. were never to be tacked to his name. He grew weary of having to retire from the bench when a division was about to take place ; and at last, like a snail who has ventured out of its shell too long and been annoyed by external injuries, he retired within himself, and became as mopish and as indolent as ever.

Unfortunately for the peace and happiness of our domestic circle, he at last took to cards, as a last resource against time and ennui. He made my mother and myself play dummy whist every morning, because our tutor—for we were privately educated—refused to make a fourth ; for which piece of delinquency I am happy to say he was discharged, and succeeded by a

more reasonable Oxonian. Though this evening's rubber was rather tedious, I did not mind it so very much, for I began to understand and like the game; but, when he discovered that the hours which intervened between luncheon and dinner passed more quickly if he played a few rubbers at cribbage, I began to grow weary of cards, home, and every thing. I learnt the game, and played daily, until the monotonous "fifteen two, and a pair's four, and his nob's five," became hateful to me, and I resolved to do no more in that line.

Erupi, evasi. I broke through the rules of paternal discipline by escaping from the paternal property. I fled; and where could I go to so readily and pleasantly as to the Grange? I approached it stealthily at first, and, instead of boldly venturing to the hall-door and demanding an interview with the squire, I hung about the back premises, and at last ventured into the stables to look at the pony on whose back I had been promised a ride.

I never shall forget the trepidation I experienced when I got to the door of the stable

in which I instinctively felt the pony must be tied up. No one was in the yard; no window from the house looked into it; still I trembled as I raised the latch, which I was just high enough to reach. It yielded to the light pressure of my thumb, and, with a palpitating heart, I entered. Judge of my surprise, when I saw a long range of stalls, occupied by horses of all ages, sizes, and colours, and at the end of them the squire himself, seated on a corn-bin, smoking a cigar—then a modern luxury—and talking to two very knowing-looking grooms.

I was about to retreat, but one of the grooms rushed at me, and pulled me roughly into the stable, closing the door behind me. He asked me rudely who I was, and what business I had there. Before I could answer his questions, he had forced me up to where his master was sitting. As soon as he saw who the intruder was he bade the man release me, and taking me kindly by the hand said he was very glad to see me. I was still very much frightened, and I have no doubt looked very much like a fool.

"Well, what brought you here, my little man?" asked the squire, "have you a message from your father?"

"Oh no, sir," said I.

"You have come over then on purpose to see me?"

"No, sir, I came to see the pony; the pony you promised to give me a ride upon."

"So I did, and you shall ride upon him; but have you been used to riding?"

"Oh yes, sir," said I boldly, "I've been used to riding on a rocking-horse."

The squire smiled, and the grooms laughed outright. I felt a little abashed, though I knew not exactly why; but my confidence was restored when I heard an order given to Tom to saddle the pony and lead him out into the close.

While this order was being executed, I remained by the squire's side, for he had seated me by him on the corn-bin, and he put a great many questions to me, which I answered to his evident satisfaction. He was married, but had no children, which was a cause of grief to him, as he had then a considerable estate, al-

though it was gradually wasted by his gaming on the turf, and keeping the fox-hounds.

When little Phyllis, a pretty gray pony, with a long tail and flowing mane, which had been kept for Mrs. Dashingly's sole and separate use, was announced to be ready for mounting, the squire placed me on his back himself and led the gentle little creature round the close, giving me instructions how to sit, place my knees and heels, and how to carry my bridle-hand.

I suppose I was born a horseman, for in less than half an hour I had actually cantered round the close without laying hold of the pommel of the saddle : and excessively proud I was of the exploit, but not more proud than my master, who doubtless attributed my success to his instructions.

I returned home, having received an invitation, or, more properly speaking, an order to come over to the Grange every day when the weather permitted me to leave the house. I was too happy and too proud of my success to keep my morning's amusement a secret ; and, as I played very badly at whist that night, for

I was thinking of little gray Phillis all the time, instead of the cards that were out, I was strictly forbidden by my father to go over to Mr. Dashingly's again without his express permission.

The dread, however, of "fifteen two and a pair," and the temptation of riding the pony, were too strong for my sense of obedience. The very next day after lessons were over I was off to the Grange, and had my ride on Phyllis; but I took care not to say a word about it when I returned home to any one but to my next brother, whom I threatened to thrash soundly if he betrayed my secret. For nearly a month I escaped discovery, for my brother was true to his trust, and my father was deeply engaged at cribbage with our tutor; but I was unluckily discovered through a trifling but disfiguring accident.

I had acquired so good a seat in the saddle that I could leap over any thing that Phyllis ventured to attempt, and the squire used to ride with me daily to give me further instructions, and to exercise some one of his hunters. The grooms, with whom, by means of sundry

tips out of my pocket-money, I was a great favourite, would sometimes accompany us, and we had many a jolly gallop over the hills down into the marshes, where we had soft turf and plenty of space to enjoy ourselves, and we could amuse ourselves and breathe our horses by viewing brood mares and foals of all ages.

It happened one day, on our return from the marshes, that the squire challenged me to ride one of the hunters instead of the pony, and to race him to the top of the common. I had too much pluck or was too careless of consequences to refuse; so I jumped off Phyllis, and was mounted by Tom on the quiet old hunter that he had been riding. The stirrups were shortened as far as the holes would permit of their being shortened, but even then they were too long for me. Tom was about to cut fresh holes for the buckle with his knife, but I put my feet into the leathers above the stirrup-irons, and found that plan do famously.

“Off!” cried the squire.

“Yoicks forward!” shouted the grooms.

I gave the old horse a dig in his ribs with my heels, to which the loose stirrup-irons gave a double effect: away he went at a terrible pace, to be sure, but I did not mind it. I found I could sit him as easily, if not more so, than the pony, for his back was broader, and his gallop a very easy one.

“Yoicks forward!” cried I, as I was leading, and saw over my shoulder the squire following a few yards behind me. “Yoicks forward! I shall win,” and I positively screamed with joy at the thoughts of beating my riding-master. On, on, went the spirited old fellow, answering every dig of my heels with an extra spring. On, on — the goal was in sight — the gate of the common at which we were to pull up. Nothing intervened but an old thorn-bush, under which I had often gone at full speed on Phyllis’s back; and, as it was the nearest cut, I went right at it then. I heard a shout of “round it, boy, round it!” but, before I could even guess what it meant, I found something like a hand-saw grate across my face, and my person lying head downwards on the old hunter’s croup, being held on by the stirrup-

leathers, from which I could not release my feet.

I was in a most dangerous plight; but the old horse, as if aware of my danger, pulled up and stood quite still, until Tom, who had galloped up to me, released me. The squire laughed so much when he saw that I was not seriously injured, and was joined so heartily by the grooms, that I felt my dignity hurt, and turned very sulky, which only made them laugh the more. Their laughter, too, lasted all the way to the stables, and when I got there, through pain and indignation I gave vent to my feelings in a hearty fit of crying.

Still the squire and his grooms, in spite of my tears, continued to laugh—in fact, it was a positive Niagara of laughter, an unceasing cataract of hah, hah, hahs! hoh, hoh, hohs!

“What...can...you...see...to...laugh...at?” blubbered I.

“Bring him your shaving-glass, Tom, and let him see his face,” said the squire.

Amidst hah, hah, hahs! and hoh, hoh, hohs! Tom managed to detach six inches by three

of triangular-shaped mirror from the saddle-room wall, and placed it before me. I gave one look, and shall never forget what I saw. My face was scored like a piece of pork prepared for roasting, and the blood mingled with my indignant tears was smudged all over my countenance. I cried more than ever, but was soon consoled by the squire, who told me that "I had ridden like a man, and fairly beaten him, and that it was not my fault that I had been unseated by the branch of a thorn-bush."

I dried up my tears, and was taken in doors. Mrs. Dashingly was shocked when she saw me, and reproached her husband for exposing me to such risks. I, however, made light of it, and was thoroughly washed, had my wounds covered with court-plaister, and my pockets stuffed with fruit before I proceeded home.

This was very consolatory, but a promise that I should have another race on the old horse on the following day was far more so. I forgot the smart of my wounds, and never gave a thought to the figure my plas-

tered-up face must present to the eyes of my fond parents, when I arrived at home.

I entered the hall ; and, as I had just washed, or been washed, I did not think it needful to repeat the operation, but proceeded at once to the drawing-room.

“ Good gracious me ! ” screamed my mother.

“ Hah, hah, hah ! ” shouted my brother.

“ What means this ? ” said my father.

I briefly explained—for I hated a lie—and my father took me out into the hall, and there, in spite of my mother’s intercessions in my behalf, he took a bamboo, or supple-jack, as he called it, and gave me so sound a beating that I could have roared for pain, only I was too proud to do it.

I was sent off to bed dinnerless ; but the old butler, who thought that the being deprived of a meal was the greatest punishment that could be inflicted on any body, brought me up a well-furnished tray, and I made a very hearty meal, in spite of the soreness of my skin.

As I was strictly forbidden to leave the house under any pretext whatever, and Squire

Dashingly fancied that my non-appearance at the Grange was the result of the injuries I had received in the race, he rode over to make inquiries, and was sulkily received and rather cavalierly treated by my father and mother, who accused him of being the cause of my unfilial conduct and inauspicious appearance.

Dashingly owned that he was to blame in having placed me on a horse to race with him, but said, in his defence, that he wished to make a man of me, and put me in a situation to join in the sports of country gentlemen, among whom, of course, I should be ranked when I came into my property. These remarks induced my father to be more communicative than he would have been, and to explain to his neighbour that, although he had a sufficient income to enable him to retire from business, and live independent, he had not amassed enough to justify him in making me a gentleman, by which he meant an idle man. I was, he said, destined for the counting-house as soon as my education in writing, arithmetic, and book-keeping was completed. He merely had me taught a little smattering of Latin and

Greek, because it was considered proper and correct, and served to fill up my time.

I was present at this part of the conversation; for I had been sent for by the express wish of the squire. I felt, and I have no doubt looked, very sulky at hearing that I was doomed to sit a high, hard stool, instead of a live horse and a pig-skin saddle: for I hated the thoughts of business, and looked upon a clerk in a counting-house as a degraded animal, a pent-up, emasculated, pen-nibbing menial.

The squire saw my look, and smiled. My father saw it, and frowned, and looked supplejackically at me.

"I never could do a compound division sum," said I; "and I know I never shall."

"Won't you? We shall see," said my father, with a peculiar dry cough at the end of his speech, and a pendulous movement of his right arm.

"Come here, my little fellow," said the squire. "What should you like to be? Tell me. Speak out; do not be afraid."

I whispered, "A gentleman—or a huntsman—or a whipper-in."

"Good gracious!" cried my mother.

"Degraded being!" said my father.

"What a rummy notion!" said my brother; for which bit of vulgarity he was ordered out of the room.

"Should you like to come and live with me entirely?" asked Mr. Dashingly.

"Shouldn't I? that's all," I replied.

My father rose to knock me down; but my friend interposed, and seriously offered to adopt me and send me to college at his own expense, if my parents would permit him to do so.

My mother sighed, and said she thought that Mrs. Dashingly ought to be consulted before any answer was given to so important a proposal.

The squire intimated that he was in the habit of being master in his own house, and that his lady usually considered his wishes as commands, and obeyed them accordingly.

This did not appear quite satisfactory to my mother; but my father, who, like a true Bris-

tol man, had one eye at least always open to his interests, asked the squire if he were really serious.

I trembled for his answer; but it was very satisfactory. He was serious; he had no children of his own; he had taken a fancy to me; and he thought that I should add to the happiness of his home. I should be but a quarter of a mile from my parents, and could visit them whenever they wished to see me.

My father still hesitated; but I firmly believe it was only because he should be obliged to play dummy whist until my next brother was initiated into the mysteries of two, or four, by honours, and the odd trick. He yielded at length, however, and I rode to the Grange, my future home, behind the squire, leaving my boxes to be sent after me, and bidding adieu to my family without a single feeling of regret; for ours was any thing but a happy home.

Behold me installed at the Grange, a favourite with every body about me. I was as happy as the day was long; for I was on horseback, or in the stable and paddocks, from

morning until night, with my friend, to whom I grew greatly attached, and who really loved me, for he had an affectionate heart, and admired my pluck, as he called it, in breaking colts, and teaching horses to leap that never would leap before. When the hunting season came round, the hold I had upon his love was strengthened ; for I headed the field, and kept the lead. I stopped at nothing ; but still rode so judiciously at the age of fifteen, that I put to shame many who had passed a long apprenticeship to the art of hunting.

The gentleman who had for years hunted the country was run into by grim death. Dashingly immediately bought the hounds ; as much to gratify me as himself, I really believe. To the fascination of the stable was now added that of the kennel, and I shortly became as good a feeder and physicker of dogs as I had been a breaker and trainer of horses.

I might have passed my life in the stable and kennel, and been forced to gain a livelihood in after-life by going out as a huntsman or horse-breaker, had not Mrs. Dashingly

pointed out to her husband the folly of neglecting my education by allowing me to pass all my days in idleness, as she termed it. He saw his error, and engaged the services of my predecessor in the rectory to read with me for a few hours daily. I was much behind-hand in my "classic lore;" but, as I knew it was an ungentlemanly thing not to have had a classical education, I set to work willingly, and read very hard.

When I was eighteen, I was sent to Oxford, and easily obtained my degree; for, in those days, but little was required to satisfy any two M.A.s whom you chose to fix on to examine you. I had not been extravagant at the University; in fact, the only recreation in which I indulged was riding, and the squire allowed me to keep a hunter. I was too anxious to get back to the Grange to delay an hour after term was over in Oxford, but rode home across country as hard as I could without blowing my horse. When I was dubbed B.A., you may suppose that I galloped from Oxford faster than ever, for I had nothing further left to do but to enjoy myself with my

much-loved friends, whom I thought I should never quit again.

Not to weary you, let me relate to you the most important incident in my life, the saving the life of my kind patron, my more than father.

I was just turned two and twenty when the event occurred. It was on a beautiful morning in November, ere the leaves had quite quitted the trees, or the long grass rotted on the banks and in the grips, for the autumn had been unusually fine and late; the wind blew softly from the south, and the sky was covered with a thin, grey, misty curtain; the dew was on the grass, and every thing gave token of a fine scenting day; the hounds, when they left their kennel, sniffed the air and gambolled about, as if conscious of a sure find and a long run, without a check; the horses pawed the ground, and neighed, and tossed their heads, as if impatient for the meet; and a smile, a joyous smile, sat on every brow as the squire and I rode into the lane where huntsman, whippers-in, and sundry hangers-on, awaited us. The squire gave a

jovial cry, to which we all, dogs included, responded; and, with hearts beating in our bosoms more exultingly than usual, we set off for the gorse on the common where now stands the Widows' Almshouse.

A larger field than usual was assembled to meet us. Every one seemed to be in excellent spirits, and good sport was anticipated. The hounds were thrown in, and in less than five minutes a joyful note from a sure old hound announced that a fox was found. He broke cover speedily, and gallantly rushed through the low coppice that skirts the hill into the open country below, a sure sign that he meant to shew us sport.

You must imagine the run; for such things have been so often and so well described that I need not waste your time with what would appear a mere repetition. I had kept just beside the squire, allowing him to lead a little; and gallantly we rode that day; nothing stopped us; and we were before the whole field. The hounds were pressing the fox hard, and were within sight of us. Only one small hedge and ditch divided us. I have

said that the mildness of the season had caused the leaves to remain longer than usual on the trees and bushes, and the long rank grass to flourish undecayed. It made the riding dangerous; for it was almost impossible to see the sides of the ditches and furrows. Many a horse stumbled and threw its rider from not leaping quite far enough.

“Forward, Dowton; we shall have him in the open,” shouted the squire, as he pushed his horse at a gap in the hedge. The horse scarcely rose at the leap; his fore-legs slipped into the blind ditch on the other side, and he fell over on his back, with my friend under him.

I was following so closely that I could only prevent myself from leaping on him by throwing my horse back on his haunches so violently that he fell with me. I, however, sprung from the saddle before he reached the ground, and stood unhurt. The field were close behind me, coming up as fast as they could. I took off my cap, and waved them from the gap, to which they were making. All obeyed me save one, a young man, who had evidently

no command of the horse he was riding. I shouted, I screamed, I danced in agony, but to no purpose; on, on, came the pulling brute; and I knew that if he took the leap he must kill my patron. I waited till he came up, and, just as he was rising to make his spring, I seized his bridle, and, jerking his head round, turned him into the hedgerow, into which he blundered and fell, but without hurting either himself or his rider materially.

How sick, how faint I felt, when the danger was past! I sunk on the ground, and my arm seemed as if it had been wrenched from its socket. The young man whom I had so unceremoniously unseated came up to me and inquired the meaning of my conduct. I could only point to the gap. He walked up to it, and was soon satisfied that I had acted judiciously in stopping his wild career, for he saw Dashingly lying there with his horse upon him, unable to move. He returned to me, and, taking out a small flask, applied it to my lips. The spirit it contained revived me, and with his help I was able to scramble over to the other side of the hedge.

The squire lay apparently insensible. The horse was struggling hard to rise, which, from the position in which he had been cast, was impossible, without more assistance than I could render him, for my right arm was nearly powerless. Every time the horse raised himself and fell back again heavily upon the squire's thigh, a groan of anguish escaped him, as if it put him to exquisite torture. I held down the horse's head by lying across it, and begged the young man to mount my nag (which was standing quietly grazing where I had left him, though he had scampered off the moment he found himself at liberty) and ride after the field and claim their aid.

Never did the whoo-whoop ! the signal of the fox's death, sound so sweetly in my ear as it did at this moment, for I knew that assistance would speedily arrive. Yet minutes seemed to be hours ; for the wounded man opened his eyes, and in faint whispers, mingled with groans of agony, begged of me not to let him lie there and die, but to release him. I could only assure him that aid was nigh, and that he would soon be relieved.

I saw the whole field approach, headed by the huntsman. I saw him spring from his horse at my side, but I saw no more — the excitement had been too much, and I fainted.

When I recovered I saw the squire's hunter uninjured, standing by me. Before me on a hurdle lay his master. A sporting surgeon, who had fortunately been able to join us on that day, was giving directions to some labourers how to convey him home without putting him to additional pain. His thigh, I was told, was frightfully broken, but beyond that he had sustained no injury that was likely to affect his life. The thigh had been set and bound fast to a hurdle-stake, which was the only substitute for a splint that could be obtained. As we had run a ring, we were not above two miles from the Grange, and I urged the bearers to convey him home as rapidly as they could consistently with his safety.

The moment the squire heard my voice he beckoned me to him. He took my hand, and was about to raise it to his lips, but the agony which it caused made me shriek out.

"You are hurt," said he, "in saving my

life. I saw the horse coming upon me when you turned his head. I shut my eyes, expecting instant death, and I suppose fainted. But call the surgeon, and before I am moved one step further let him examine you, and assure me that you are not seriously injured."

In vain I urged him to wait until he was conveyed home; he would not hear of it, but ordered the bearers to stop in so peremptory a tone that they obeyed.

The surgeon stripped me, and after a careful examination assured the squire that the muscles of the arm were violently strained, but, beyond that, that I was uninjured. The loss of a little blood, some fomentations, and a few days' rest would, he said, soon set me to rights again.

We reached home, and were received by Mrs. Dashingly, who, having been apprized of the extent of the injury by one of the field, was prepared to meet us with less agitation and alarm than she would have been had she seen her husband borne home on a hurdle without knowing the nature of his accident.

We were both put to bed. I was bled and

fomented, and treated so judiciously that in less than a week I was about again as well as ever I was, except that I could not use my right arm, and was forced to carry it in a sling. Not so my poor friend. For months he lay on a hard mattress, and when he rose from it, it was to be a cripple to the end of his life. The nature of the fracture was such that, though he had been cleverly treated, it left one leg some inch or two shorter than the other.

At his request, I managed the hounds for the remainder of the season, and his chief amusement, as he lay on his bed of pain, was to listen to my account of the day's run. At the close of the season they were sold, for it was quite clear he would never be able to join them again.

Unfortunately, by way of amusement, the squire took to the turf. He was not sufficiently acquainted with its tricks to be on his guard against impositions of all sorts. His horses never won, and his book was invariably badly made up. He persevered, however; and the consequence was that lawyers were

in monthly request, and farm after farm was mortgaged or sold.

Mrs. Dashingly, who, besides the affection she felt for one who had been to her as a son, believed that I had been the means, under Providence, of saving her husband's life, was anxious that I should be provided for before everything was sacrificed. She mentioned her wish to the squire: he readily entered into her views, and advised me to take orders, that I might be enabled to succeed to this living on the death of the incumbent, now far advanced in years.

I did so—after consulting with my father—but reluctantly I must confess, for I thought I was unsuited to the profession. I, however, put myself under the tuition of the rector, gave up all thoughts of hunting, and, by a diligent attention to my studies in divinity, and a careful observance of the manner in which he performed his pastoral duties, I fitted myself for the profession. I was examined and passed, and ordained upon this curacy. After the decease of my tutor, I was appointed his successor, and have lived a happy, single life ever since.

“But how came you to take the degree of doctor of divinity?” I inquired.

“Doctor? I am no more a doctor than yourself. My parishioners have dubbed me so, just as in many places they call the apothecary doctor : every one of my friends has followed their example.”

“What became of your patron and his lady?”

“They both died in the same year, and lie buried in my church. Come with me, and I will shew you their tomb.”

“And your parents?”

“They also lie in my church. My brothers and sisters are dispersed over England, serving their country, by adding to its wealth and population.”

“Do you never hunt now?”

“Never, except in imagination, or over the pages of Somerville and Beckford. I confess to stealing a look at the hounds now and then, and am somewhat addicted to physicking my friends' horses when they are out of sorts or condition. But here comes our host of to-day, in good time, as my little story is told.”

CHAPTER LV.

Jonathan Sternpost came up to us blooming with a healthy glow — the result of a long walk round his farms. He drank a glass of the rector's mildest ale, and, when he had rested himself sufficiently, we set off for the Mount.

We found Mr. and Mrs. Lauderley and four of the six widows assembled to meet us; of the two who were not present one was a little unwell, and the other, the Indian lady, was slightly out of temper, and would not join her friends because she was affronted at not having had the best seat in the omnibus placed at her disposal.

We had a very happy and a very merry meal. The children came in after dinner, and were fondled and petted to their hearts' con-

tent. We did not sit long over our wine, but entered the drawing-room early, where, after our coffee had been sipped, we had music and cards and conversation, until murky night and the clock on the chimney-piece warned our friends to take their departure. I parted with them with regret, for I felt the presentiment to which I have alluded before—that I should never see them again.

The rector remained with us, and we retreated to the library to enjoy a last cigar. Alas! it proved but a dismal evening, or rather night, for a cloud, beyond that arising from the fragrant herb, hung over us. We tried to rally, but we could not rally, and after spending a sad hour, we wished each other good night and retired.

I passed a sleepless night, or rather a restless one, for I did sleep at intervals, but it was that dreamy, toss-about sort of slumber in which your fancy is as busy as in your waking hours.

Morning broke, and I heard with joy the tap of the servant who had come to call me, and to pack up my goods and chattels. I

dressed quickly, and found my friend Jonathan and his lady waiting breakfast for me in the library, although I had expressed a wish that I might be allowed to take my chance with the passengers on the coach, by which I was about to return to my home, at the inn where we were given ten minutes to refresh ourselves.

I took a cup of strong coffee, but could not eat, although kidneys and broiled bones offered strong temptations. I shook my hostess by the hand, kissed the children, tipped the servants, and accompanied by Jonathan Sternpost and the man who carried my luggage, walked rapidly down to the corner of the lane, where the coach was to take me up.

The patter-patter of horses' feet, the rumbling of wheels, and a monotonous too-tooing on a tin horn, proclaimed the approach of the public conveyance. A few minutes brought it in view; the coachman pulled up, and paid his respects to my friend; the guard strapped on my luggage; I mounted upon the box-seat, which had been kept for me, and, nodding my adieus, started for my home.

I turned round after we had got about a hundred yards along the road, and saw Jonathan Sternpost still standing where I had left him. I waved my hand, and the signal was answered. A turn in the road shut him out of my view, and I could not prevent the tears which fell from my eyes, as I was fully persuaded I had seen him for the last time.

What extraordinary things are those presentiments which are but seldom, in mercy, vouchsafed to us, lest they should render life miserable! If such a thing as the gift of second sight did exist, I cannot imagine a more unhappy wretch than the possessor of it.

But a truce to these reflections. The chat of my driver soon drove all gloomy thoughts out of my head. The merry rattle of the wheels, the rapid pace at which our four thorough-breds spanked along, and even the monotonous too-tooing of our guard, cheered my depressed spirits. We had a delightful day, and when I arrived at home I found all well and delighted to welcome me.

I wrote, as in duty bound, to thank my friend and host for the pleasant week he had

afforded me; described my journey, and gave a concise history of all the little uninteresting events which had happened in my circle during my absence. We exchanged a few more letters during the twelve months that followed, containing mere how d'ye do's and good wishes. But a letter at length arrived in which Jonathan entreated I would lay aside my pen and my professional engagements for a time, and spend a week with him.

I resolved to comply, as I was really nervous and ill from over-working, and wanted a change of scene and occupation. Moreover, I felt a sort of feverish anxiety to prove myself wrong in having indulged in presentiments which I then began to think foolish and even wicked. I answered his letter, and told him to meet me on the Monday following at the spot at the corner of the lane where I had parted from him.

My little preparations were soon made. I kissed my children, and took my place on the coach. How different was my journey to that of the preceding year! I was upon the same coach-box, and some of the same horses were

hurrying me along, but the man who drove them was a stranger who knew me not, and had never heard of my friend's name. He was surly, moreover, and the most uncommunicative coachman I ever met with. All I could extract from him was that he had been out of place a long time, and was working a few journeys for the regular driver, who was laid up with the gout. Even the too-too-ing of the tin horn was missing, for the player thereon was dead, and the guard who had succeeded him was not musically inclined.

The day, too, was unpropitious. A rough windy night—for it had blown a gale of wind,—was succeeded by a solemn grey day. A mist hung over every thing, and you could scarcely see fifty yards before you. The roads were, what coachmen call, woolly, and the horses' skins sent forth a vapour that seemed ready to choke one, as they toiled at their arduous work. The mist was shortly converted into a steady solid rain, such as wets one through very speedily. I wished to take a seat inside, but the coach was full, so I wrapped myself

up closely, and made up my mind to brave the weather.

As I had no one to converse with, I could not help contrasting my journey of this day with the one of twelve months before, and the thought of the contrast made me more wretched than ever. Then all was bright, gay, and delightful — now everything looked dark, gloomy, and unpleasant. The mile-stones seemed to have been set wider apart, and the inns to have been removed to a more respectful distance from each other. I tried a cigar and a glass of strong ale, and tempted the brute by my side to join me, in hopes of making him a little more talkative, but although he smoked and drank freely enough, he remained as silent and sulky as ever.

How glad I felt when we arrived at the last stage! We changed horses, and I begged the driver to slack his hand and not to spare his whip; convincing him, by showing him my watch, that we were much behind our time. The hope of an additional shilling tempted him, and we pushed along faster than we had done before, but at no great speed, after all.

How anxiously I looked for the turning of the road which would bring to my view the corner of the lane which led to Mount Whistling! At length we arrived at it. I caught sight of some one standing at the corner, who, I had no doubt, though he was wrapped up in a great coat and covered with a huge umbrella, was my dear friend, Jonathan Sternpost.

I unbuttoned, got my sulky driver's tip ready, ordered the guard to get my portmanteau from under the tarpaulin, and when the coach pulled up I sprung down, rushed round the hind-boot, and grasped the hand of my friend—the rector.

The guard placed my portmanteau by my side, touched his hat, sprung to his seat, called “All right,” and was out of sight in a few minutes.

“John,” said the rector, “there is this gentleman's luggage. Carry it up to my house.”

The man, in whom I recognized the parish-clerk and gardener of the rectory, obeyed; and, when he had thrown the portmanteau over his shoulder, trudged on before us.

“Dr. Dowton,” said I, “something is

wrong, I am sure. Why is my friend not here to receive me?"

The rector stopped, and seemed nervous and agitated.

"Do not be afraid to speak out," said I. "I am prepared for the worst, and am not afraid to hear it."

"I really would rather....."

"Nay, nay; do not hesitate; tell me the worst at once."

"Well, then, our poor friend is ill—is....."

"Dead," said I.

"Not dead, I trust, but seriously hurt. He has met with a sad accident."

"Lead me quickly to him, and tell me how he was hurt as we go along," said I, walking forward as rapidly as I could.

"Gently, gently, my good friend," said the rector. "You forget that my years will not enable me to keep up with you; and you must not go to the Mount until I hear from the surgeon how our poor friend is."

I slackened my pace immediately, and begged him to tell me, without reserve, how Jonathan had been hurt.

"I know not," said he, "what sort of weather you experienced last night, but here....."

"It blew a perfect hurricane," said I.

"It did. I scarcely ever remember so severe a gale of wind. I was dining at the Mount, and Mrs. Sternpost had left the room but a few minutes, after congratulating her husband on the receipt of your letter, which had arrived that morning, when the butler entered, and said that he was afraid that there was a fire, either up at the keeper's house, Mr. Tit Dowell's, or at the Almshouse.

"We sprung up from the table, threw open the windows, and, looking over the woods, saw the sky and the tops of the trees brilliantly illuminated.

"'It is a fire, certainly; but where it is I cannot say. Order two horses to be saddled immediately,' said the squire.

"The man obeyed, and Mrs. Sternpost, who met him at the door, and heard the order, bade him be quick.

"But a few minutes passed before the horses were at the door; but in those few minutes Mrs. Sternpost had managed to convey to her

husband her wishes that, if the fire was at the Almshouse, all its inmates should be sent down to the Mount immediately.

“The promise was given; we sprung upon our horses, and in a few minutes arrived on the terrace, where, you may remember, the summer-house stands. There the light was as the light of day, and, on turning the corner of the beech-wood, we saw the Almshouse in flames. We left our horses tied to a tree, and rushed as speedily to the spot as we could. The chapel and the hall were already burnt to the ground. Lauderley’s house was rapidly falling in, and the flames had communicated to the widows’ lodgings on either side. To save the place was impossible, for the fire was fanned into a fierce furnace by the wind that blew. To save the inhabitants was all we could hope to do; and we were relieved by finding that they were all safely congregated in a part of the building that still remained untouched by the flames. We gave thanks to God for it, and urged Lauderley, who stood the figure of despair, to convey them at once to the Mount, and to return to us.

“He did so, and we had nothing else to do but to stand and watch the progress of the fire, around which a few, and but few, persons had assembled; for the work of destruction had been as speedy as sure.

“Suddenly, a cry was raised that the lodge in which the poor crippled keeper lived was on fire. Some of the burning flakes had been borne on the wind, and communicated with the woodwork of the building. We hurried to the place, and met the poor old woman, the keeper’s wife, wringing her hands, and entreating some one to save her bed-ridden husband.

“Jonathan heard her entreaties, and hastened to obey them. He rushed into the house and up the stairs, caught the helpless creature in his powerful arms, and was conveying him down the stairs, when his foot slipped and he fell upon his head, and, I fear, has fractured his skull.”

A deep, a heavy groan, escaped me. I said not a word, but followed the rector into his house, where we found the surgeon waiting to receive us.

“What news?” said the rector.

“Bad,” said he. “Jonathan Sternpost is *dead*.”

Reader, years have passed away; the Widows' Almshouse is restored; but my friend can only be restored to me “in another and a better world.”

THE END.

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